

THE DARK PAGES

The Newsletter for Film Noir Lovers

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SPECIAL SUPER-SIZED ISSUE!!

January/February 2010

From Sheet to Celluloid: The Maltese Falcon

by Karen Burroughs Hannsberry

As I read *The Maltese Falcon*, by Dashiell Hammett, I actually found myself flipping more than once to check the copyright, certain that the book couldn't have preceded the 1941 film, so closely did the screenplay follow the words I was reading. But, to be sure, the Hammett novel was written in 1930, and the 1941 film was the third of three features based on the book. (The first, released in 1931, starred Ricardo Cortez and Bebe Daniels, and the second, the 1936 film, *Satan Met a Lady*, was a light comedy with Warren William and Bette Davis.) For my money, and for most noirists, the 1941 version is the definitive adaptation.

The 1941 film starred Humphrey Bogart as private detective Sam Spade, along with Mary Astor (Brigid O'Shaughnessy), Sydney Greenstreet (in his first film role, portraying the "Fat Man," Kasper Gutman), Peter Lorre (Joel Cairo), and Elisha Cook, Jr. (Wilmer Cook). The film was directed by John Huston (in his directorial debut), who also penned the screenplay. As previously noted, the book and the screenplay were closely aligned, with entire lines in the movie taken directly from the book, including some of my favorites, as when Spade smacks Joel Cairo, telling him, "When you're slapped, you'll take it and like it," and when Spade remarks to Wilmer, "The cheaper the crook, the gaudier the patter."

Despite the numerous and ongoing likenesses, however, there were also several notable differences. First off, some of the book's racier scenes and bits of dialogue were omitted. The first of these examples came during one of Spade's visits to Brigid O'Shaughnessy's apartment. During this visit, Spade tells Brigid that he has gotten a visit from Joel Cairo, who offered him five grand for the black bird. Stung by Spade's admission that he is considering the offer, Brigid tearfully claims that she has given him all of the money she has and then makes a stunning counter-offer: "I've thrown myself on your mercy, told you that without your help I'm utterly lost," she says. "What else is there? Can I buy you with my body?" After I'd recovered from the shock, I found myself laughing out loud at book-Spade's response: "I'll think it over."

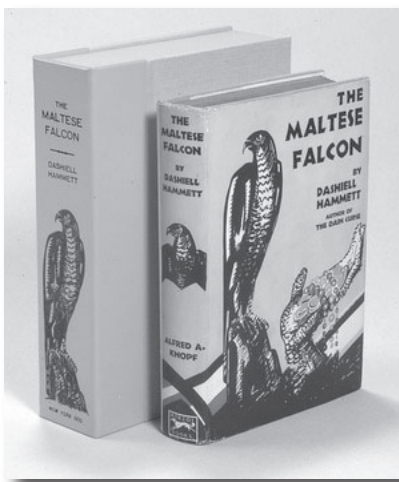
An infinitely more outrageous scene took place later in the book, where the film's principal characters gather in Spade's apartment to discuss the logistics for obtaining the Maltese Falcon and

decide on who will be the "fall guy" for the murders of Thursby and Archer. As in the book, the film depicts Gutman giving Spade an envelope containing 10 one-thousand dollar bills as a payment for the black bird, and Spade hands it over to Brigid for safe keeping. But when Brigid heads for the kitchen to make coffee and Gutman suggests that she leave the cash-filled envelope, he announces that it now only contains \$900. Spade immediately deduces that Gutman palmed one of the bills and threatens to "frisk" him until the fat man admits that Spade is correct. But a far different scene played out in the book where, when the missing bill is announced, Spade ushers Brigid into the bathroom and orders her to strip naked to prove her innocence. Only after obtaining this irrefutable proof does Spade accuse Gutman of taking the cash.

Another difference between the book and the film concerned the character of Rhea, Gutman's 17-year-old daughter, with whom he was traveling, along with Wilmer. Rhea is entirely absent from the film, but in the book, she appears in one principal scene. In both book and film, after Captain Jacobi stumbles into Spade's office with his wrapped parcel, Spade's secretary, Effie (Lee Patrick), answers a frantic call for help from Brigid O'Shaughnessy. In the film, Spade is led on a wild-goose chase, as the address Brigid gives him as her whereabouts

turns out to be a vacant lot. But in the book, he is led to Gutman's hotel room, where he finds Rhea Gutman, who has been drugged and is sticking herself with a pin to stay awake until Spade's arrival. In Hammett's version, it is Rhea, not Brigid, who gives Spade the "bum steer" with the phony address.

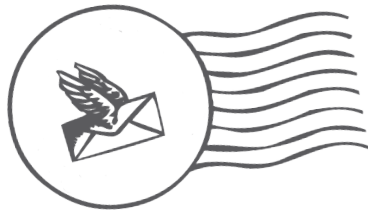
A major omission from the film concerns a passage that has come to be known as the "Flitcraft parable." It's a story that Spade tells Brigid during a visit to her apartment, shortly after he informs her of his meeting with Joel Cairo. In a nutshell, the story is about a successful family man from Tacoma named Flitcraft who, while walking down the street one day, is nearly hit by a steel beam that falls from a construction site. The man was so rattled by the experience that he never returned home to his wife, two sons, and successful business. Five years later, Spade – who, at the time, was working for a Seattle detective agency – was hired by Mrs. Flitcraft when a man meeting her husband's description



See *MALTESE FALCON*, continued on page 7

The Dark Pages Readers Sound Off . . .

Letters . . . We Get Letters!



Regarding Weda Mosellie's comments on the name "Veda" from the film *Mildred Pierce* – you ain't heard the half of it, but I'll clue you in as I reconstruct a scene from the film: Veda has gone to work as a canary in Wally Fay's gin mill. She not only belts out a nifty number, but she's a curvy cutie and will be a great draw at a waterfront joint like Fay's. Mommy Mildred ain't happy and goes backstage with Veda to shoot the breeze. First, they give walking papers to another hired hand who is played by Veda Ann Borg. And so we have a character Veda in a scene with an actress Veda – a bit unusual given the unusual name. What I ain't sure of it this: in an early scene, after Monte gets plugged, Mildred goes to see Wally at his dive. A canary is warbling the 1938 ditty "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby." The frail might be Borg, but is it she? I can't get a handle on it.

Allan Weischedel, Nevada

In the Sept/Oct. 2009 *Dark Pages* you called attention to the TCM showing of *The Killer is Loose* with a brief overview of the film and a special mention of co-star Wendell Corey's busy year of 1956. *Night of the Auk*, his Broadway stage project of that year, unfortunately did not take up too much of his time, with a run of only eight performances. But just look at the high-powered names involved: Fellow cast members Dick York, Christopher Plummer, Claude Rains (!) and Martin Brooks (with Corey, that was the entire cast). The great Sidney Lumet directed radio scriptwriting legend Arch Oboler's only (I believe) Broadway venture.

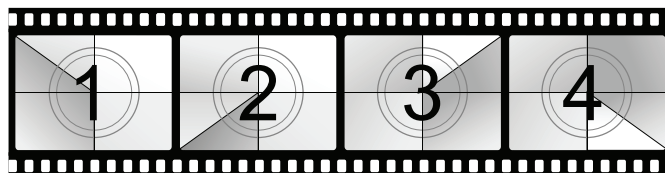
So, what went wrong? Well, I think I can make a case for "bad timing." The drama involved rocket ships, space travel, and a moon landing – very possibly not what the play-going public was looking for in a season that featured *Bells Are Ringing*, *Auntie Mame*, *L'il Abner*, and *Long Day's Journey Into Night*. However, in just a few months, Sputnik would shock the world into an awareness of the real possibilities of space exploration. Had *Night of the Auk* debuted during the 1957-58 Broadway season rather than a year earlier, Corey and cast might have had a hit on their hands.

John Bickler, Ontario, California

Internet Site of the Month

Are you on Facebook? If you are, and you haven't joined already, check out the Film Noir group created by Matthew Hoffman of Park Ridge, Illinois. In addition to offering a forum for discussing film noir, the site contains nearly 800 film noir photos which can occupy you for hours!

Of film noir, Matthew writes, "It's a universe of fallen angels and black angels . . . raw deals and pitfalls . . . roadblocks and detours . . . and cities that never sleep. Film noir is a shadowy world of existential loners, of chumps who willingly accept their downfall, of mobsters looking for a taste of the high life, of women both redemptive and destructive, of desperate men who just want an even break. Noir is a dark city of blind alleys, losers' lanes, and side streets leading to dead ends. And even in the outskirts of the city, somewhere in the night, a devil is thumbing a ride. Noir is inhabited by hard-boiled private detectives, double-dealing dames, carnival hustlers, psychotic killers, disillusioned artists, broken-down boxers, and a million others from every dark corner of society. The noir universe is a place where (in the words of Roberts in *DETOUR*): "Fate, or some mysterious force, can put the finger on you or me for no good reason at all."



THE DARK PAGES

P.O. Box 2716

Chicago, Illinois 60609-2716

Karen Burroughs Hannsberry..... Editor
Kristina Dijan..... Senior Writer
Alan Bickler..... Contributor
Vic Ghidalia..... Contributor
Gary Gordon..... Contributor
Weda Mosellie..... Contributor
Allan Weischedel..... Contributor

DEADLY IS THE SCREEN

by Kristina Dijan

Happy New Year! There's a lot to enjoy in the next few months both on TCM and DVD, and for some strange and completely unintentional reason, lipstick, politics, name changes and scheduling problems kept popping up in this column.

JAN 14 *While the City Sleeps*, TCM 6.15am

Reader question: Is there a better large ensemble cast in all of noir-dom than Dana Andrews, George Sanders, Ida Lupino, Thomas Mitchell, James Craig, Rhonda Fleming, Vincent Price and Howard Duff? They all work at Kyne Enterprises, a giant media corporation populated with tough, cold-hearted ambitious climbers and users. The death of the head executive leaves his immature son in charge of the company, as well as leaving an open position that will be awarded to the person who best covers and uncovers the identity of the "Lipstick Killer" who has been terrorizing the city. The battle begins as Kyne's TV, photography and print divisions feed at the sensational story, and at each other. There's an early example of "profiling" and it's used to lure and enrage the killer (John Barrymore, Jr.) when he is described on TV as a mama's boy whose brain has been warped by reading too many Strangler comics. This is a fantastically gripping movie that rewards repeated viewings, because of its great acting, lurid details and love affairs, and a prophetic look at the media figures who now more than ever shape our news as well as report on it.

JAN 17 *Scene of the Crime*, TCM 2am

JAN 17 *Dragonwyck*, TCM 2pm

JAN 20 *Sunset Blvd.*, TCM 1am

JAN 20 *Lady in the Lake*, TCM 8am

Audrey Totter was supposed to do both this film and *The Killers*, but lost the latter role to Ava Gardner due to schedule changes, and got *Lady* due to a strange coincidence. When director and star (if you can call him that in this film) Robert Montgomery was casting *Lady*, he had actually asked MGM for a reel of another actress' work, and was sent Totter's role as "salesgirl" in *The Hidden Eye* by mistake. Montgomery liked what he saw, though, gave Totter another screen test and promptly offered her the part of Miss Adrienne Fromsett, which was increased considerably by screen- and pulp-writer Steve Fisher.

JAN 23 *In a Lonely Place*, TCM 8am

JAN 26 *Man Hunt*, TCM 10pm

JAN 27 *I Was a Communist for the FBI*, TCM 10.15pm

JAN 29 *Johnny Guitar*, TCM 10.30am

JAN 30 *Dark Corner*, TCM 10am

FEB 3 *Moonrise*, TCM 10pm

FEB 6 *Bad Day at Black Rock*, TCM 4.30am

FEB 6 *Crossfire*, TCM 6am

FEB 10 *Kiss of Death*, TCM 8pm

FEB 10 *Pickup on South Street*, TCM 10pm

FEB 12 *Mildred Pierce*, TCM 12pm

FEB 13 *Chinatown*, TCM 1.30am

FEB 16 *Key Largo*, TCM 10.15am

FEB 18 *Naked City*, TCM 4.15am

FEB 19 *The Bad & the Beautiful*, TCM 1.30am



Don't miss Van Heflin, Patricia Dane and Robert Taylor in Johnny Eager.

FEB 19 *Johnny Eager*, TCM 3.30am

Noir has a lot of Johnnys (certainly enough for a Top 10 list), and here's one of the first (predated by Johnny Apollo) and best. MGM was not generally renowned for its gangster flicks or its noirs, but what it had in spades, and lavished generously on this 1941 production, was glitz, gloss, glamour and star power, all of which made this a huge hit. Johnny Eager was one of the first steps toward transforming Robert Taylor from a romantic pretty boy to a manly man, in this case a racketeer who at first is only pretending to go straight. Taylor was the one who chose this specific role and fought hard to land it, against the strenuous objections of Louis B. Mayer. The D.A. on Taylor's case (Edward Arnold) has an adopted daughter, Lana Turner, who's studying to be a social worker and falls for the slick gangster. Initially Taylor gets involved with her because he sees a way to keep the D.A. off his back and prevent a future prison stay. Taylor frames the girl in a staged murder and uses the setup to blackmail Arnold. Inevitably Taylor falls for Turner and sets things right, necessarily destroying himself in the process.

See DEADLY, continued on page 8

Maltese Falcon Goofs and Flubs

by Karen Burroughs Hannsberry

The Maltese Falcon is one of those noirs that you watch again and again. But the next time you watch it, keep an eye out for this fantastic film's numerous goofs and flubs. It'll give you a whole new Falcon-viewing experience!

- ✓ In the opening scene where Miss Wanderly meets Archer, Spade is leaning forward in the main shot as Archer is seen sitting on his desk. Then, a second later, in the shot shown over Miss Wanderly's shoulder, Spade is seen relaxing back in his chair.
- ✓ As Spade speaks to Brigid O'Shaughnessy in the first scene of the movie, there's a file cabinet in between Miles' and Spade's desk. Throughout the scene, the books on top of the file cabinet move without anyone going near them.
- ✓ When Dundy (Baron MacLane) and Polhaus (Ward Bond) are in Spade's apartment, Spade serves a drink to them. When he begins to serve, Dundy is standing and Polhaus sitting. Then Polhaus stands up, on the right side of Spade. In the next shot he is in front of Spade, right next to Dundy.
- ✓ In the scene with Joel Cairo and O'Shaughnessy in Spade's apartment, Cairo lights a match with his left hand. In the next second, the lit match is in his right hand.
- ✓ When Joel Cairo returns to his hotel after being interrogated by the police he asks for the key to Room 603 - but earlier he has told Spade that he lived at Room 635.
- ✓ When Effie is on the phone with Iva as Spade enters his office, we hear her say, "No, not yet," but her mouth is closed.
- ✓ In the same scene where Effie does her ventriloquist act, Spade is not wearing any jewelry when he walks into his inner office to have a brief chat with Brigid. But when he emerges from the inner office and sits down on the desk to chat with Effie, he is wearing a wedding band on his left hand, another ring on his right hand, and a wristwatch. When he walks back into his inner office to make a call, the rings and watch are gone.
- ✓ When Sam first goes to see Gutman in 12C, as he walks down the corridor we can see that directly in front of him is a chair, a table with flowers on and a silhouette of a diamond framed window and the flowers on the wall, but when he leaves we can see two chairs either side of the table and the diamond frame silhouette is not there.
- ✓ As Gutman and Spade talk about the black bird, there is a table to the right of the window containing a vase full of flowers. When Spade, after being drugged, rises from the sofa, the vase of flowers is gone.
- ✓ After the ship's captain delivers the Falcon to Sam Spade's office, he collapses on the leather sofa in the foreground. Just after Effie asks, "Is he . . . ?" the shadow of someone's head passes over the back of the sofa.



This scene with the film's stars is chock full of bloopers!

- ✓ As Spade and Gutman talk about determining a "fall guy" for the murders, there is a lamp on the table to Gutman's right. The lamp, which has two very distinct handles, rotates 45 degrees during the scene.
- ✓ When Spade first puts the newspaper-wrapped Falcon on the table, Gutman is smoking a cigar. A second later, when Gutman starts to unwrap the bundle, there is no cigar in sight.
- ✓ Gutman wildly cuts at the Maltese Falcon with his knife, but in one of the inserted close-ups of him, he's just standing still, with his arms not moving.
- ✓ As Gutman is slicing away energetically at the Maltese Falcon, his voice ("Fake . . . it's a phony -- it's lead!") is clearly dubbed by another actor.
- ✓ After Gutman discovers the Maltese Falcon is a fake, he puts the statue upright. He is not holding the knife. But a close-up shows his hand resting on the table, with a knife in his right hand.
- ✓ Towards the end, after Brigid tells Sam she can't look at him and tell him what really happened, she covers her face with her hands. From another angle a second later, her hands aren't there. 📞

The Guns of Noir

by Gary Gordon

Basic ingredients of noir films include, among other things, guns – specifically handguns. They are the overt threats that propel story lines, motivate actions, and define characters; though one can find the occasional knives, blunt instruments and threats of physical violence, you seldom find machine guns, shotguns or rifles, and almost never see blackjacks, brass knuckles, or garottes.

All these other threats are potentially deadly, but they just don't make the top of the list. Why? Because handguns are ideally suited to the composition of the classical academy-sized screen. They fit the frame and center the camera's images.

Hold a handgun on the protagonist(s) and the scene crackles with excitement and menace, dialog snaps, and plot and character are clarified. All in medium camera shots that give the actors their best chance to engage the audience by interacting with each other: guy, gal, villain, gun. On the lobby card still. It's a natural.

And the handgun itself? Everybody sees it – few really examine it. Occasionally I do. Let's take a closer look at the thing that holds the scene together. It comes in two forms: revolvers and automatics.

REVOLVERS. They're the ones with the revolving cylinders, tubular barrels with little sights on the end and rounded handles. Triggers are in oval trigger guards, a finger curled around them. Hammers, curved protusions at the top rear, can be down or cocked (pulled up and back). And locked (held mechanically). When cocked in the middle of a scene, the threat increases dramatically.

This kind of revolver is called a double-action, which means a pull on the trigger can raise and drop the hammer – bang! – or the thumb can pull the hammer back and it stays cocked until the finger on the revolver twitches – bang! Almost all revolvers in noir films are double-action. In Western movies, most revolvers are single-action, which require a separate cocking for each shot fired. Arms development from the 1870s to the 1920s resulted in the more versatile double-action revolver.

LOADING. Revolvers have a number of loading methods. For our noir study, two are predominant; the swing out cylinder and the top break. Swing outs are somewhat more dramatic as the cylinder swings out to the left on an arm, called crane, showing the bullets in it; it's sometimes spun before being flipped closed by a twist of the wrist. It's poor firearms procedure to flip, but it sure demonstrates a hard-boiled attitude. The top break pivots the barrel and cylinder down to pop out spent shells and show an empty cylinder. It's a different dramatic device: no bullets left! The reloading and forceful closing of the top break revolver show resolve and menace. Both swing outs and top breaks are tough-guy handguns par excellence.

COLOR. Most noir revolvers are "black." Actually they are "blued," a dark coating to preserve the metal. In black and white film, it shows up black and shiny. Even in color film, most "blued" handguns look black, though recent treatments can produce a non-reflective surface resembling flat black paint. There are other colors (you might not believe some "mod" ones are pink!), but for our noir purposes, the only other significant

color is "silver" or "chrome." This is really nickel plate, another surface treatment that once was considered superior to "bluing," though more costly. It has fallen into disuse for many years, but noir films will keep nickel plate visible into eternity.

In noir, a person with a "silver" handgun is usually a dandy, a sissy, an oddball, or a woman. Sexist, of course. But we noirists inhabit a world of filmatic yesterdays. The "silver" gun is more noticeable on screen and tends to be smaller in size and less seriously wielded. I've never counted, but I suspect more silver than black guns have been

forceably taken away by the heroes.

AUTOMATICS. Big, black revolvers are the mainstay of noir, but a sizable number of "automatic" types are in evidence. In fact, these are semi-automatic pistols. A true automatic pistol fires like a machine gun (rat-a-tat-tat!), is extremely rare, large, and wildly uncontrollable. Not the thing for those wonderful personal confrontations noirists love to see.

The semi-automatics' general appearance is squarish, flattish, and streamlined. Shoulder holsters under suit jackets are their natural habitat. They are stylish and were, once upon a time, high-tech. Uniformed cops didn't carry them; plainclothes detectives might. Well-dressed villains and upscale private eyes favored them for concealment while attending high-class soirees, expensive nightclubs and high-rolling gambling establishments. The dinner jacket and the automatic pistol were meant for each other.

LOADING. A semi-automatic pistol is a clip-fed firearm, which means the bullets are stacked in a separate metal case or sleeve called a clip which usually fits into the pistol's grip. When empty, it must be removed and replaced. And here is the movie problem: though carrying more rounds (up to a dozen bullets) than the usual six-shot revolver, automatics must have pre-loaded clips for replacement. Without going into the procedure, it just doesn't look "cool" on screen to mess with new and used-up clips. So old-styled automatics are seldom seen being reloaded by actors who might seem awkward doing it and are stuck with an empty clip in hand. Don't throw it away; it's expensive!

See GUNS OF NOIR, continued on page 12



Photo by Jim Ferreira

You've Got Questions, We've Got Answers

The Story of Sonia Darrin

by Karen Burroughs Hannsberry

Dark Pages subscriber John Bickler from Ontario, California, writes: "I admit I have a real thing for actress Sonia Darrin, but know nothing about her except that she has three credited roles (*The Big Sleep* chief among them – as pornographer Geiger's, er, secretary). Have you ever run across any biographical info on her? Dare I hope she might still be with us?"

After a bit of digging, I learned that Sonia, who played Agnes Lowzier in *The Big Sleep*, is alive and well and living in New York City. Not only that, but I found out that Darrin is the mother of titian-haired Mason Reese, who enjoyed a measure of childhood celebrity in the early 1970s as the pitchman for a number of products (including Dunkin Donuts, Ivory Snow, and Underwood Deviled Ham, for which he charmed TV viewers with his mispronunciation of the word "smorgasbord"). He also worked for a time as a temporary co-host for Mike Douglas (on which his mother appeared with him on several shows), was a children's reporter for WNBC-TV, worked on a prime-time show with Howard Cosell, and did a pilot for his own TV series. (As an adult, Mason went into the restaurant business, owning several restaurants, including his most recent venture, the Destination Bar and Grille in New York's East Village.)



As Agnes Lowzier in *The Big Sleep*,
Sonia Darrin goes toe-to-toe with Bogart.

As for Sonia, she had only a brief career in Hollywood, appearing in fewer than 10 films between 1941 and 1950. In fact, she was not even credited for her role in *The Big Sleep* – quite an oddity, since she had a bigger and more significant role than many of the other players in the film. In her son's 1974 autobiography, he wrote, "Mommy has red hair, too. When she was a little girl, she lived in Hollywood and became a beautiful actress. She doesn't act anymore, but she's still beautiful."

According to Ron Scheuler, who pens an Internet blog about a wide variety of subjects (including, apparently, missing noir actresses), Sonia was born Sonia Paskowitz in Galveston, Texas, one of three children of Louis and Rose Paskowitz. Louis

operated a dry goods store in Galveston, but it wasn't a success. The family later moved to San Diego, where Louis supported his family working as a shoe salesman. As for the Paskowitz children, Dorian, the oldest son, went to Stanford and became a doctor, Adrian studied music and became a music teacher and violinist, and Sonia wound up in Hollywood. Sonia left Hollywood (probably in the early 1950s) and headed East, where she met and married Bill Reese, a one-time theater set designer who eventually ran his own marketing services company, specializing in 3-D design work. Bill and Sonia went on to have four children.



Sonia's son, Mason Reese, a
well-known child actor from
the 1970s.

Sonia resurfaced in a 2007 documentary called *Surfwise*, which focused on the unorthodox life of Dorian "Doc" Paskowitz, his wife, Juliette, and their nine children. (Doc Paskowitz espoused a strict non-fat, non-sugar diet, and led his family on an ongoing quest for freedom and health, moving from beach to beach in a 24-foot camper and eventually opening a surf camp in Southern California.) Included in the documentary was Sonia Darrin, who was seen on camera discussing her brother's stubborn nature and explaining that she once took in two of Dorian's sons

when they rebelled against their father's regime. (I must say, the film sounds fascinating – as described by one reviewer, "If you mix *The Endless Summer* with *Grey Gardens*, adding healthy dashes of *The Brady Bunch* and *The Partridge Family*, you might get *Surfwise*." I've already put it at the top of my Netflix queue.)

Believed to be in her 80s, Darrin now sports red hair and, according to Schuler, "her green eyes light up with that sly intelligence when she smiles, and the years cannot hide that melodic quality in her voice, the one that you can hear in each line she delivered in *The Big Sleep*, over 60 years ago." ☎

Question of the Issue:

What movie do you consider
to be the perfect noir?

Write us at *The Dark Pages* and tell us why!

The Ghidalia Files

by Vic Ghidalia

This Postman (Wedding) Rings Thrice

Film noir players Glenn Langan (*Dragonwyck*, 99 River Street, Hangover Square) and Adele Jergens (*Armored Car Robbery*, *Edge of Doom*, *Try and Get Me*) were teamed in the non-noir *Treasure of Monte Cristo*. Femme fatale Jergens schemes to get Langan to marry her so she can steal his inherited fortune. However, as the plot unravels, she discovers she really loves him and he winds up with both the girl and the treasure. Adele and Glenn married the same year as the film's 1949 release and remained wedded until his death in 1991. This goes to prove that for this film noir couple, there was much "I Do" about something.



Is that a hot, steaming cup of noir in Virginia Christine's cup?

Bet She Prefers Her Coffee "Noir"

Virginia Christine portrays a mild femme fatale in the crime thriller *The Invisible Wall* (1947), with Don Castle as an inveterate gambler. On their initial encounter, he asks her, "Had breakfast yet?" She responds, "Yes, but I'd like another cup of coffee." This is ironic, considering her most recognizable role, years later, in the Folger's coffee commercials. Was she already auditioning in 1947 for her Mrs. Olson role?

Cop Out

George Brent, who later in his career, starred in a number of film noir features (*The Spiral Staircase*, *Temptation*, *Illegal Entry*, *FBI Girl*, and *Man Bait*) "copped out" when he appeared in a non-film noir offering, *The Corpse Came C.O.D.* He portrayed a newspaperman who tells his editor he'd like to duck out for a while to visit his movie star girlfriend.

"She needs me desperately," explains Brent.

"Why don't you call a cop?" asks the editor.

"The cops!" exclaims Brent. "Why, she needs someone with a great, big brain."

Obviously, Brent is unaware that his editor is played by Cliff Clark, one of Hollywood's leading portrayers of high-standing police officials. ☎

MALTESE FALCON, from page 1



Lee Patrick, Bogart, and Mary Astor – before the stuff hits the fan.

was spotted in Spokane. It turns out that it is Flitcraft, who has adopted a new name, but has settled into a new life much like his old one, with a wife, son, and a thriving career. Spade meets with the man, who tells him that, although he'd disappeared in an effort to change his life, he'd eventually found himself in the same routines and patterns of his previous existence. "That's the part of it I always liked," Spade tells Brigid. "He adjusted himself to beams falling, and then no more of them fell, and he adjusted himself to them not falling."

Like Brigid, who appeared to be clueless as to the reason for, and message behind, Spade's tale, the Flitcraft parable has caused a great deal of speculation in the decades since the publication of Hammett's book, and it's understandable why it is not a part of the film. After reading and re-reading the story, and studying the opinions of a number of film scholars, I found that the following explanation makes the most sense – Spade is trying to tell Brigid that despite the extreme, seemingly out-of-character actions people may display on any given occasion, they will always, eventually, revert to form. In Brigid's case, Spade is conveying that she may appear to be innocent, but Spade knows that she is an incurable liar and, even, that she will one day betray him. (Pretty deep, huh?)

The final significant difference between the book and the film concerns their respective endings. In the book, Gutman is killed by Wilmer shortly after he departs with Cairo, intending to continue his quest for the black bird. The final scene finds Spade returning to work the following Monday morning, having a brief discussion with his secretary, Effie, about having given Brigid over to the police, and then learning from Effie that he has a visitor – the wife of his dead partner, Iva, with whom (in both book and film) he has been having an affair. With resignation, Spade tells Effie to send her in. And there the book ends.

The film's conclusion is a bit more, shall we say, poetic. The screen version ends after Spade's detective pal Polhaus tells him that Gutman and Cairo have been arrested. Polhaus then picks up the black bird and asks Spade, "What is it?" Spade, paraphrasing Shakespeare, responds, "The stuff dreams are made of."

If you like *The Maltese Falcon* on the big screen, I guarantee you'll get a kick out of Dashiell Hammett's original. ☎

DEADLY, from page 3

Instrumental in finding Taylor's heart of gold beneath the cynical crust is his only friend, the intellectual, philosophical, and poetic Van Heflin. Amazingly, considering the caliber of his co-stars, Heflin outshone them, and won an Oscar for his performance; it was the first awarded to any gangster movie. Mervyn LeRoy (*Little Caesar*) directed, and brought some degree of grit and authenticity to the picture, but this was more glam than grit, with one of the most gorgeous screen couples ever, captured at their primes. They were indeed "Pure TNT!" as the ads described them – "Taylor 'n Turner – Together they're terrific!" Dressed to the nines, both give excellent performances. Robert Taylor proved he could be tough and hardboiled, a persona he would perfect after the war in noirs like *Undercurrent*, *High Wall*, and *The Bribe*, as well as in other genres. The movies Lana Turner made in this same year made her a star, and she was as innocently beautiful here as she would be dangerously so in 1946's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. Such a well-matched couple, but sadly, despite plans for several more film pairings, they never made another movie together.

FEB 20 *Blue Dahlia*, TCM 2.15am

FEB 22 *Sunset Blvd.*, TCM 6pm

FEB 24 *The Third Man*, TCM 10.30am

When this movie came out, it was no hit in Vienna; the Viennese were not impressed with the film's portrayal of them as "grasping and cowardly." But with the movie achieving classic status, there are streams of curious tourists to entertain, and Austria's capital has realized the value of offering many *Third Man* attractions. Next time you travel to Vienna, you can take part in a walking tour, an underground tour of the film's sewer locations, see a screening of the film and even visit a museum full of memorabilia. For more, read the article "Cult Film 'The Third Man' Starring Orson Welles Lives On" at www.artknowledgenews.com. (Type "The Third Man" in the search box.)

FEB 25 *The Killers*, TCM 8pm

According to Gary Fishgall's biography of Burt Lancaster, when producer Mark Hellinger was casting for this film, he originally wanted cowboy star and real-life war hero Wayne Morris, but Warner's wanted too much money to loan Morris out (Warner's basically benched Morris for a year after the war and he didn't work until 1947). Next Hellinger thought of Sonny Tufts, but concluded that Tufts lacked the necessary "screen presence." Hellinger then followed up on some studio gossip about some new kid at Warner's, and set up a meeting with him. His name was Burt Lancaster, and while talking to Hellinger about the role, Lancaster spilled his coffee and came across as so clumsy, ruffled and awkward that Hellinger found him exactly right for the role of the Swede. Turns out, Lancaster, ever the graceful acrobat, knew what Hellinger was looking for, and had been acting the part for Hellinger the whole time. When Hellinger showed the screen test to his wife, she said Burt was okay, not too handsome, but realized women would go for him in a big way,

and he was cast. One outstanding matter was the actor's name – Warner head Hal Wallis wanted to name the kid Stuart Chase, but there was already a prominent economist by that name, one of FDR's leading thinkers and planners, and the man who actually coined the phrase "New Deal." So, Wallis and Hellinger were still mulling over possible monikers for the hunky new kid when Hellinger's secretary came up with a brilliant idea – just use his real name, Burt Lancaster.

FEB 29 *Johnny Guitar*, TCM 10.30am

MAR 1 *Possessed*, TCM 9.30am

MAR 2 *The Maltese Falcon*, TCM 9.30am

MAR 3 *Asphalt Jungle*, TCM 1.30pm

MAR 4 *Out of the Fog*, TCM 12.30pm

MAR 4 *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, TCM 5.30pm

MAR 4 *To Have and Have Not*, TCM 9pm

MAR 7 *The Killers*, TCM 4.15am

MAR 7 *The Big Knife*, TCM 10.15pm

MAR 8 *The Bad and the Beautiful*, TCM 4am

MAR 13 *White Heat*, TCM 8pm

MAR 14 *The Big Heat*, TCM 12am

MAR 15 *Brute Force*, TCM 4.15am

MAR 19 *The Las Vegas Story*, TCM 6.45am

Here Vincent Price plays husband to Jane Russell, and the couple visit Las Vegas where Russell used to be a lounge singer. When Price gambles his way into big debt, he crosses paths with sheriff and Russell ex-boyfriend Victor Mature. The plot had Price stumped; he was unhappy with the couple's disintegration, and felt the story provided insufficient character development or explanation. Today we explain it thus: "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas."

MAR 19 *Macao*, TCM 4.15pm

MAR 20 *Kiss Me Deadly*, TCM 8.30am

MAR 22 *The Big Sleep*, TCM 8pm

"You're cute . . . very cute. But I am cuter." So says Bogart, as Marlowe, to Martha Vickers, as Carmen, and most would dispute *that* claim. *The Big Sleep* was Martha's first movie at Warner's, and also the first with her new screen name Vickers. At Universal, then RKO, she had been going by her real last name, MacVicar. *The Big Sleep* was a new start, and is easily her best and most memorable role; as the promiscuous sister of Lauren Bacall, Vickers' naughtiness gives someone a wealth of blackmail material, and detective Philip Marlowe a lot of secrets to investigate. Two years after the film, Martha married Mickey Rooney for a short time, and worked for another 13 years and 11 more movies before her untimely death of cancer at age 46. (See page 6 for more on one of *The Big Sleep's* featured players, Sonia Darrin.)

MAR 22 *The Maltese Falcon*, TCM 10pm

MAR 26 *Side Street*, TCM 10am

MAR 26 *No Questions Asked*, TCM 11.30am

MAR 26 *Asphalt Jungle*, TCM 2.30pm

MAR 26 *Johnny Guitar*, TCM 4.30pm



Sinatra and Sterling square off in Suddenly.

MAR 26 *Suddenly*, TCM 6.30pm

After his success in *From Here To Eternity*, Frank Sinatra took this role, playing one of a group of assassins who invade a California home, hold the residents as hostages and wait for the presidential train to arrive in town. It was the second consecutive film where Sinatra was (spoiler alert!) killed at the end. It was also one of two Sinatra movies to take on eerie associations with John F. Kennedy's assassination; Sinatra withdrew *Suddenly* from circulation when he learned that Lee Harvey Oswald had watched the film before the shooting, and Sinatra's other assassination-themed picture, *The Manchurian Candidate* was also pulled from public view for a number of years.

MAR 27 *The Killers*, TCM 8.30am

MAR 28 *Sunset Blvd*, TCM 2pm

MAR 30 *Blue Gardenia*, TCM 2.30pm

MAR 30 *The Blue Dahlia*, TCM 4pm

Hugh Beaumont's biography has some interesting contrasts. Though Beaumont started college as a football player, he ended up with a Masters of Theology, and was an ordained minister. He is best remembered as one of TV's most famous and loving dads, but he made many noirs, was a thoroughly convincing tough, and took over the role of Michael Shayne from Lloyd Nolan, making five films in the series. It was in between those Shayne movies that Beaumont was in *The Blue Dahlia* as Alan Ladd's buddy George Copeland. After his retirement from acting, Beaumont operated a Christmas tree farm in Minnesota.

DVD release news:

Despite my predictions of doom and gloom and the lack of DVDs in last issue's column, there seem to be a lot of interesting releases coming early in 2010. Whether they all qualify as noirs in the strictest sense, however, is for you to decide.

At the Warner Brothers shop (go to www.wbshop.com and click on "warner archive" to browse or search by title) new titles are being added all the time, and you can order *Out Of The Fog* (John Garfield, Ida Lupino) *Suspense* (Belita, Barry Sullivan), *Berlin Express* (Merle Oberon, Robert Ryan), *Highway 301* (Steve Cochran), *Smart Woman* (Brian Aherne, Barry Sullivan), and *Woman on Pier 13* (Janis Carter, Robert Ryan). There's also *Lightning Strikes Twice*, where Richard Todd plays an ex-con wrongly accused of his wife's murder, who returns home to Texas to find the real killer (also starring Ruth Roman, Mercedes McCambridge and Zachary Scott). Richard Todd, who passed away in December, aged 90, was a bona fide war hero, one of the very first British paratroopers to drop into Normandy on D-day. Todd relived some of his war experiences when he starred in two films based on WWII, playing an RAF pilot in *The Dam Busters*, and in *The Longest Day* he played the very same Major Howard with whom Captain Todd fought that June 6 to seize Pegasus bridge. Fearing he would not live to see the 65th anniversary events, Todd traveled back to Normandy in May 2009, and, for a UK newspaper feature, recounted his harrowing experiences, friends lost and found, heroism and pride at the freedom won on that decisive day of June 6. After the war, the Irish-born Todd built up a career in film and stage, with early successes like *The Hasty Heart*, Hitchcock's *Stage Fright*, and *A Man Called Peter*. In 1962 Todd was Ian Fleming's first choice to play James Bond in *Dr. No*, but scheduling problems prevented him from taking that place in pop culture. Sadly, Todd's heartaches and tragedies did not end with the war; two of his four children committed suicide, one son in 1997 and another in 2005.

January 2010:

The British Cinema Drama Collection includes *Grand National Night* (Nigel Patrick), *Kill Me Tomorrow* (Pat O'Brien), *The Scamp* (Richard Attenborough), and *The Rough and the Smooth* (William Bendix).

February 2010:

British Film Noir contains *Twilight Women* with Lois Maxwell (aka "Miss Moneypenny") and *The Slasher* with Joan Collins.

No Orchids for Miss Blandish, from the novel by James Hadley Chase, is a British attempt at hardboiled noir.

Forgotten Noir: Volume 13 will have *Eye Witness* with Robert Montgomery and *Breakdown* with Ann Richards.

Columbia classics releases two collections titled *Bad Girls Of Film Noir*. Volume 1 includes *The Killer That Stalked New York* with Evelyn Keyes as a diamond smuggler and smallpox carrier hunted by doctors and medical experts alike. In *Two of a Kind* Edmond O'Brien impersonates a long lost heir to claim a family fortune. In *Bad for Each Other*, with Elizabeth Scott, doctor Charlton Heston is torn between honor and money. Finally there is *The Glass Wall* with Gloria Grahame and Vittorio Gassman.

See DEADLY, continued on page 12

Homme Noir Discoveries, or “How I Got My Big Break”

by Karen Burroughs Hannsberry

In this issue, The Dark Pages takes a look at the paths taken by the following noir fellas to reach the land of noir.



His cheekbones filled the bill.

When John Dall (*Gun Crazy*, *The Man Who Cheated Himself*) was 10 years old, his father's work took the family to Panama, where the youngster developed a knack for sneaking out of the family home to go to the movies. After several years in Panama, John landed a job as a handyman for a local theater company, memorizing the actors' lines as he worked. One night, an elderly actor in the company's play, *Yes Means No*, became ill shortly before the curtain went up, and the 13-year-old, six-foot-one inch John convinced the director to let him take the actor's place. It was his “professional” stage debut.

After enrolling in Temple University on a football scholarship, with plans to become a lawyer, Barry Sullivan (*Tension*, *The Gangster*) developed an interest in acting. “The drama coach saw me in a football team minstrel show and offered me a part in a school play,” Sullivan recalled in a 1969 interview. “Suddenly, I was an actor.”

Following in the footsteps of his stage actress mother, Elisha Cook, Jr. (*The Big Sleep*, *The Maltese Falcon*), got his first taste of acting during his teen years while selling programs for the play, *Lightning*, in the lobby of the Blackstone Theater in Chicago. A chance encounter one evening with the play's star, Frank Bacon, set an irrevocable course for Cook's future. “I

went down to meet him and he said, ‘Would you like to go on the stage?’ I said, ‘Sure, I guess so.’ I did a walk-on in the courtroom scene. I did pretty good, so later he says to me, ‘Want to go to New York?’ He was quite a guy, Mr. Bacon was.”

After working in such varied posts as engineer for a meatpacking firm and floor walker in the lingerie department at Chicago's Marshall Field's department store, Burt Lancaster (*I Walk Alone*, *Sorry, Wrong Number*) moved with his wife, Norma, to New York City, where Norma had landed a job as secretary to a radio producer. According to legend, Lancaster was riding in the elevator in the RCA building one day to take his wife to lunch when he discovered that he was being intensely observed by a fellow passenger. The man turned out to be an associate of Broadway producer Irving Jacobs. Impressed by Lancaster's bearing and good looks, the man suggested that he audition for the role of an American soldier in Jacobs' upcoming play, *A Sound of Hunting*. To his surprise, Lancaster won the role – his Broadway debut.

Jack Palance (*Sudden Fear*, *Panic in the Streets*) enrolled in Stanford University in 1945 under the G.I. Bill of Rights, majoring in journalism. Later, he took a summer course in radio, participating in writing, announcing, producing, and acting, then landed a role in a local production of *My Indian Family*. The play's star, veteran actress Aline MacMahon, encouraged Palance's theatrical aspirations and a short time later, he borrowed \$100 from his roommate and headed for Broadway. In New York, he auditioned for a play being directed by Robert Montgomery, entitled *The Big Two*. “When I saw all of the other would-be actors in the waiting room, I was about to walk out when Mr. Montgomery stopped me by saying, ‘I want you.’ He had been looking for a Russian type and my cheekbones filled the bill.”

John Ireland's (*Railroaded*, *Raw Deal*) entry into the world of acting came strictly by chance when he went inside the Davenport Free Theater in Manhattan one day, thinking he would take in a free show. Instead, he found that the company offered free acting training, along with room and board, and a dollar per day. Financially strapped and lacking direction for his future, the young man signed up with the theater, where he went on to appear in a variety of productions, including plays by Ibsen, Shaw, and Shakespeare.

A former pro football player and wrestler, Mike Mazurki (*Murder*, *My Sweet*, *Nightmare Alley*) got his big break after a fateful encounter with famed director Josef von Sternberg. While appearing in a wrestling match at the Olympic Theater in Los Angeles, Mazurki was spotted by the director, who was in the process of casting “foreign types” for his upcoming feature, *The Shanghai Gesture*. After being tapped for the role, however, Mazurki recalled that his resemblance to the film's star, Victor Mature, almost lost him the part before shooting began. “Walter Huston suggested they shave my head, and I got the part,” Mazurki recalled. “So I owe my career in pictures to Walter Huston.” ☎

Salute to Jean Simmons

by Karen Burroughs Hannsberry

One of my favorite films noirs is *Angel Face*, starring Jean Simmons, who died of lung cancer on January 22, 2010. She was 80 years old. During her lengthy career, which spanned seven decades, she was seen alongside such stars as Kirk Douglas, Gene Tierney, Marlon Brando, Spencer Tracy, and Victor Mature, and she demonstrated a talented versatility in a variety of entertaining features.

Simmons was born in London on January 31, 1929, the youngest of four girls. At the age of 14, she was discovered during her dancing-school class by producer Val Guest and wound up landing a role in her film debut, the 1944 British production, *Give us the Moon*.

"All of a sudden, I was in a movie," Simmons recalled years later. "I got five pounds a day. I didn't take it seriously at all. I always thought I would get married and raise children like my mum."

After roles in several minor films, Simmons signed a seven-year contract with the J. Arthur Rank studio, and British director David Lean gave Simmons the role of Estella, companion to the reclusive Miss Havisham in the 1946 feature *Great Expectations*. That was followed by such films as *Black Narcissus* with Deborah Kerr in 1947 and Lawrence Olivier's *Hamlet* in 1948, for which she was nominated as best supporting actress for her role as Ophelia. In 1949 she starred in *Adam and Eve*, opposite Stewart Granger, and the following year, she visited the United States to promote the film *Trio*, which earned her a spot on the cover of *Life* magazine when the publication chose the picture as its Motion Picture of the Week. Also that year, she eloped to Tucson, Arizona, where she married the 37-year-old Granger.

When she returned to California, Simmons learned that the remaining six months of her Rank contract had been bought by RKO head Howard Hughes.

"It wouldn't be allowed today," Simmons said in an interview in 2008. "It was a bit of a shock and a big adjustment. Everything was taken out of my hands."

Distressed by what she termed being "sold like a piece of meat," Simmons sued RKO after Hughes claimed that an oral agreement with Rank precluded her from being loaned to any other studio. The legal battle continued for more than a year – during that time, Simmons starred in *Angel Face*, playing Diane Tremayne, a delicately beautiful English flower whose lovely countenance masked a lethal personality. Simmons' performance here is riveting – you can scarcely believe that someone so sweetly

refined can be capable of such sociopathic manipulations and murderous machinations.

When Simmons' lawsuit was finally settled, RKO wound up with a three-year contract for her services, but they were required to pay the actress \$250,000 in addition to legal fees, and Simmons won the right to work on loan to other studios. These included a critically acclaimed performance in the George Cukor-directed

The Actress (1953) as the stage-struck daughter of Spencer Tracy, and *Young Bess* (1953), a big-budget drama where she played the title role as Queen Elizabeth I. In 1953, Hughes sold the remainder of Simmons' contract to 20th Century Fox, for whom she appeared in such costume pictures as *The Robe* (1953) with Richard Burton, *The Egyptian* (1954) with Victor Mature, and *Desire* (1954) with Marlon Brando. Simmons had little affinity for her roles in these films, and later termed them "poker-up-the-ass parts. You know, those long-suffering, decorative ladies. I mean, they're very boring."

In the mid-1950s, free from her obligations to 20th Century Fox, Simmons appeared as missionary Sarah Brown in *Guys and Dolls* (1955) and in the title role in *Hilda Crane* (1956), earning good reviews for her performance as a twice-divorced woman who causes a stir when she returns to her hometown. (Next to *Angel Face*, *Hilda Crane* is my favorite Simmons film.)

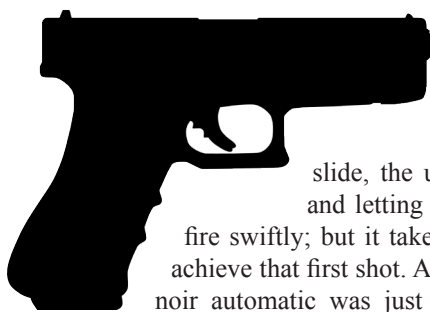
Along with her husband, Simmons became a U.S. citizen in 1956 and the following year she gave birth to a daughter, Tracy (named after her friend and co-star in *The Actress*, Spencer Tracy). During the next several years, she was seen in such features as *Until They Sail* (1957), opposite Paul Newman; William Wyler's epic western *The Big Country* (1958) with Gregory Peck; the box-office smash *Spartacus* (1960), as Kirk Douglas' wife; and *Elmer Gantry* (1960) which, for my money, should have earned her another Oscar nod for her outstanding portrayal of an ethereal female evangelist. While in England shooting *The Grass is Greener* (1960), Simmons announced that she was divorcing Granger and later that year married her *Elmer Gantry* director, Richard Brooks. In 1961, the actress had a second daughter, Kate (named for Katharine Hepburn).

Simmons was off the big screen for three years, then turned in a fine performance in *All the Way Home* (1963), but the film was one of the last of her good roles, and after a series of forgettable pictures, Simmons developed a drinking problem. In 1969, Richard Brooks wrote a film about an alcoholic wife, based partly on Simmons' experiences – the film, *The Happy Ending*

See JEAN SIMMONS, continued on page 12



Jean Simmons: 1929-2009



Be aware that semi-automatics won't fire unless initially cocked by using both hands to pull back the slide, the upper part of the pistol, and letting it snap back. Then they fire swiftly; but it takes some manipulation to achieve that first shot. Again, not "cool." So, the noir automatic was just drawn and brandished, meaning the piece was being carried around cocked, a hazardous undertaking with old-style automatics. (They're must safer now.)

And the semi-automatic had another movie problem: ejected shells. With every shot, a metallic casing flew from the gun and hit . . . something. The floor, part of the set, another actor or crew member. And, with the sound equipment available back then, it usually made a noise on the sound track when it hit. Just watch the film *Singin' in the Rain* to understand the implications.

COLOR. The same comments on the color for revolvers apply to automatics, with the observation that smaller automatics tended to be "silver," probably so they would show up better.

SIZE. Without getting too technical, bullet size is expressed in calibers or millimeters. The larger the number, the bigger the bullet. Revolvers traditionally use calibers, so a .22 cal. is smaller than a .38 cal., which is smaller than a .45 cal. Automatics usually use millimeters, so a 6.35 mm (about .25 cal.) is smaller than a 7.65 mm (about .32 cal.), which is smaller than a 9 mm (roughly .38 cal.). Bigger bullets do more damage but create greater recoil (guns jumping in the hand), which is difficult to control and accuracy can suffer. However, more noir guns are used for close range threats, so a big one is visually more impressive. Make no mistake, though – even the smallest automatic in a woman's petite hand is a deadly weapon.

REVOLVERS VERSUS AUTOMATICS. In the older noir films, automatics tended to identify the users as more sophisticated, clever, even effete; or, conversely, as modern, slick, and smart. Revolvers were down-to-earth guns for tough guys and gals who were direct and forthright. All this labeling was going on at a subconscious level while the movie played and visual impressions flowed. It was just another part of the great noir ambience.

Finally, please take this philosophy and psychology I've proffered with a big grain of salt. We know moviemaking is, and was, about getting film in the can, especially for "B" movie productions. Prop departments, in many cases, simply handed out what guns were available, directors apportioned them as they saw fit, and the actors went with what they got. So much for deeper meanings. ☎

Bad Girls Of Film Noir Volume 2 could well be called the Cleo Moore collection, since she appears in three of the four films (she's not in *Night Editor*, with Janis Carter and William Gargan). In *One Girl's Confession*, Moore steals money, hides it and does the jail time, planning on spending the dough once she's free. Moore is also in *Over-Exposed* as a dancer turned photographer, and she's in *Women's Prison* with Audrey Totter, Phyllis Thaxter and cruel warden Ida Lupino. The Louisiana-born Cleo Moore was a blond glamazon once considered a bombshell to rival Marilyn Monroe, and she was good at playing "shady ladies." At 20, she was, for a few weeks, the daughter-in-law of Huey Long, populist Louisiana governor-turned-senator who was assassinated in 1935. In her early 30s Moore joked that she could run for Louisiana governor herself and win, since she was related to half the state. But she worried about losing her southern accent, telling a reporter, "It comes back to me only when I'm shouting at fights or at baseball games." Moore garnered hype and attention for numerous and widely varied reasons: for her paintings, for first being a bit of a real estate mogul herself, then marrying one, for dating the son of the former president of Mexico, and for participating in a nearly six-minute kiss on live TV in Chicago. For years afterward, she said, people asked for her lip prints instead of an autograph, causing her to go through 10 tubes of lipstick each day. Moore retired from film by the 1960s and in 1973 died of a heart attack six days before her 45th birthday. ☎

JEAN SIMMONS, from page 11

(1969), was also directed by Brooks and starred Simmons, earning her an Oscar nomination for best actress. (In the early 1980s, Simmons checked herself into the Betty Ford Clinic and spoke frankly about her addiction.)

In 1977, Simmons divorced Brooks, but the two remained friends until Brooks' death in 1992. Career-wise, Simmons was seen in such high-profile television events as *The Thorn Birds* (1983), for which she earned an Emmy Award, and *North and South* (1985), and in 1989, she played Miss Havisham in a British miniseries version of *Great Expectations*. She was also seen in such TV series as *Murder, She Wrote*, *In the Heat of the Night*, and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. (Reportedly, the actress was a huge fan of the Star Trek series and was thrilled to make a guest appearance on the show.) Back on the big screen, she was seen in 1995 in *How to Make An American Quilt*, which starred Winona Ryder, Anne Bancroft, and Ellen Burstyn. In the early 2000s, she continued to work occasionally, mostly doing voice work in such productions as the narration of a PBS *American Masters* program on director George Cukor. Her final appearance was as a dying poet in the British feature *Shadows in the Sun* in 2009.

"I haven't worked for such a long time," Simmons said of her experience in the latter film. "It brought a joy back to my life that I thought I had lost. It did me personally the world of good."

Rest in peace, Angel Face. ☎