



Out of the Past: Adventures in Film Noir

Barry Gifford

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For a tour of *noir* cinema this handbook is the perfect companion and Barry Gifford is an ideal guide. His choice selection of films exposes the menacing, moody, and oftentimes violent underbelly of this dark movie genre that occupies a favorite niche in American popular culture.

Some are classics, some are little known and seldom seen, but all, once viewed, are deeply remembered by aficionados of *noir*. Gifford's roll call of unforgettables includes these, and more: *The Asphalt Jungle*, *Body and Soul*, *Body Heat*, *Charley Varrick*, *Chinatown*, *The Devil Thumbs a Ride*, *D.O.A.*, *Double Indemnity*, *High Sierra*, *Key Largo*, *Kiss of Death*, *Mean Streets*, *Mildred Pierce*, *Mr. Majestyk*, *Out of the Past*, *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers*, *Strangers on a Train*, *White Heat*, along with several *noir* classics from Europe -- *Repulsion*, *The Hidden Room*, *Shoot the Piano Player*, *The 400 Blows*, *Odd Man Out*.

Gifford identifies the directors and names the many *noir* stars, the greats and not-so-greats who were cast in the indelible roles of hoods, B-girls, psychopaths, grifters, gumshoes, waifs, tarts, femme fatales, mobsters, molls, and ex-cons.

In an introduction novelists Edward Gorman and Dow Mossman applaud Gifford's selections and his insights: "The movies discussed here range from the lowest of the B's to the biggest of the A's, and this book is going to make you want to run out and locate every one of them (and good luck to you; finding *The Devil Thumbs a Ride* could take you a lifetime). Through Barry Gifford's eyes we begin to see their similarities and their value. What Andrew Sarris did for the mainstream film in *The American Cinema*, Barry does here for the crime film."

With a connoisseur's insight and an offbeat sensitivity perfectly tailored to his subjects, Gifford's brief essays cover a hundred of the *noir* buff's favorites. His highly polished impressions take the reader through five decades of *noir* to find both the heart and the art of the plotline.

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