

October 28, 2008 (XVII:10)

Elia Kazan, *A FACE IN THE CROWD*, 1957, (115 min.)



Produced and Directed by Elia Kazan
Written by Budd Schulberg
Original Music by Tom Glazer
Cinematography by Gayne Rescher and Harry Stradling Sr.
Film Editing by Gene Milford

Andy Griffith... Larry 'Lonesome' Rhodes
Patricia Neal... Marcia Jeffries
Anthony Franciosa... Joey DePalma
Walter Matthau... Mel Miller
Lee Remick... Betty Lou Fleckum
R.G. Armstrong... TV Prompter Operator
Bennett Cerf... Himself
Betty Furness... Herself
Virginia Graham... Herself
Burl Ives... Himself
Sam Levenson... Himself
Brownie McGhee... Servant with limp
Charles Nelson Reilly...
John Cameron Swayze... Himself
Rip Torn... Barry Mills
Mike Wallace... Himself
Earl Wilson... Himself
Walter Winchell... Himself

ELIA KAZAN (7 September 1909, Constantinople, Ottoman Empire [now Istanbul, Turkey]—28 September 2003, Manhattan, New York City, natural causes) won an honorary Oscar in 1999 and best director Oscars for *On the Waterfront* (1954) and *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947). He received best director, best picture and best writing nominations for *America, America* (1963), and best director nominations for *East of Eden* (1955) and *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951). His other films were *The Last Tycoon* (1976), *The Visitors* (1972), *The Arrangement* (1969), *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), *Wild River* (1960), *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *Baby Doll* (1956), *Man on a Tightrope* (1953), *Viva Zapata!* (1952), *Panic in the Streets* (1950), *Pinky* (1949), *Boomerang!* (1947), *The Sea of Grass* (1947), *Watchtower Over Tomorrow* (1945), *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* (1945), *The People of the Cumberland* (1937),

BUDD SCHULBERG (27 March 1914, New York City) won a best writing, story and screenplay, Oscar for *On the Waterfront* (1954). He also wrote: *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *Nuremberg* (1946),



The Nazi Plan (1945), *Government Girl* (1943), *Cinco fueron escogidos* (1943), *City Without Men* (1943), *December 7th* (1943), *Five Were Chosen* (1942), *Weekend for Three* (1941), *Winter Carnival* (1939), *Little Orphan Annie* (1938), *Nothing Sacred* (1937), and *A Star Is Born* (1937).

ANDY GRIFFITH (1 June 1926, Mount Airy, North Carolina), appeared in 70 films and tv series, among them, *Play the Game* (2008), *Waitress* (2007), *Daddy and Them* (2001), *Spy Hard* (1996), "Matlock", "Return to Mayberry", "The Love Boat", *Rustlers' Rhapsody* (1985), "Six Characters in Search of an Author", *Hearts of the West* (1975), "The Doris Day Show", "Hawaii Five-O", "The Mod Squad", "The New Andy Griffith Show", "Mayberry R.F.D.", "The Andy Griffith Show", "Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.", *No Time for Sergeants* (1958), "Playhouse 90", "The United States Steel Hour", *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), and "The Steve Allen Show."

PATRICIA NEAL (20 January 1926, Packard, Kentucky) won a best actress Oscar for *Hud* (1963) and had a nomination for *The Subject was Roses* (1968). She also appeared in (70 instances) *Flying By* (2009), *For the Love of May* (2000), *Cookie's Fortune* (1999), "Murder, She Wrote", *Ghost Story* (1981), *The Passage* (1979), "Tail Gunner Joe", "Little House on the Prairie", "Kung Fu", *In Harm's Way* (1965), *Psyche 59* (1964), *Hud* (1963), "Ben Casey", "The Untouchables", *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961),

"Studio One", "Playhouse 90", *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *Stranger from Venus* (1954), *Something for the Birds* (1952), *Washington Story* (1952), *Week-End with Father* (1951), *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951), *The Breaking Point* (1950), *The Fountainhead* (1949), and *John Loves Mary* (1949).

ANTHONY FRANCIOSA (25 October 1928, New York, New York, USA - 19 January 2006, Los Angeles, California stroke) and a best actor Oscar nomination for *A Hatful of Rain* (1957). He appeared in 77 films and tv series, including *City Hall* (1996), *Double Threat* (1993), "Alfred Hitchcock Presents", *Death House* (1987), *Julie Darling* (1983), *Death Wish II* (1982), *Kiss My Grits* (1982), *Firepower* (1979), "Wheels/ Arthur Hailey's Wheels", "Aspen/The Innocent and the Damned", "Curse of the Black Widow", "Matt Helm", *The Drowning Pool* (1975), *Across 110th Street* (1972), "The Virginian", *A Man Called Gannon* (1968), *Fathom* (1967), *Rio Conchos* (1964), "Naked City", "The Dick Powell Show", *Go Naked in the World* (1961), *The Naked Maja* (1958), *The Long, Hot Summer* (1958), *Wild Is the Wind* (1957), *A Hatful of Rain* (1957), *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *This Could Be the Night* (1957), "Hallmark Hall of Fame", "Kraft Television Theatre" and "Studio One."



WALTER MATTHAU (1 October 1920, NYC - 1 July 2000, Santa Monica, California heart attack) won a best supporting actor Oscar for *The Fortune Cookie* (1966) and was nominated as best actor for *The Sunshine Boys* (1975) and *Kotch* (1971). He appeared in about 100 other films and tv series, some of which were *Hanging Up* (2000), *The Odd Couple II* (1998), *Out to Sea* (1997), *I'm Not Rappaport* (1996), *Grumpier Old Men* (1995), *The Grass Harp* (1995), *I.Q.* (1994), *Grumpy Old Men* (1993), *Dennis the Menace* (1993), *JFK* (1991), *Pirates* (1986), *The Survivors* (1983), *I Ought to Be in Pictures* (1982), *Buddy Buddy* (1981), *First Monday in October* (1981), *Hopscotch* (1980), *Little Miss Marker* (1980), "The Stingiest Man in Town", *California Suite* (1978), *Casey's Shadow* (1978), *House Calls* (1978), *Actor* (1978), *The Bad News Bears* (1976), *The Sunshine Boys* (1975), *The Front Page* (1974), *Earthquake* (1974), *The Taking of Pelham One Two Three* (1974), *The Laughing Policeman* (1973), *Charley Varrick* (1973), *Pete 'n' Tillie* (1972), *Kotch* (1971), *Plaza Suite* (1971), *A New Leaf* (1971), *Cactus Flower* (1969), *Hello, Dolly!* (1969), *Candy* (1968), *The Secret Life of an American Wife* (1968), *The Odd Couple* (1968), *A Guide for the*

Married Man (1967), *The Fortune Cookie* (1966), *Mirage* (1965), *Goodbye Charlie* (1964), *Fail-Safe* (1964), "Dr. Kildare", *Ensign Pulver* (1964), *Charade* (1963), "Naked City", *Lonely Are the Brave* (1962), "General Electric Theater", "Alfred Hitchcock Presents", "Route 66", "Play of the Week", *Strangers When We Meet* (1960), "Juno and the Paycock", *Gangster Story* (1960), *Onionhead* (1958), *Ride a Crooked Trail* (1958), *Voice in the Mirror* (1958), *King Creole* (1958), "Kraft Television Theatre", "Climax!", *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* (1957), "The Alcoa Hour", "The United States Steel Hour", "Goodyear Television Playhouse", *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *Bigger Than Life* (1956), *The Indian Fighter* (1955), *The Kentuckian* (1955), "Robert Montgomery Presents", "The Philco Television Playhouse", "Armstrong Circle Theatre", "Kraft Television Theatre", "Studio One", "Campbell Playhouse", "Suspense" and "Lux Video Theatre"

LEE REMICK (14 December 1935, Quincy, Massachusetts—2 July 1991, Los Angeles, California, liver and kidney cancer) received a best actress Oscar nomination for *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962). She appeared in 67 films and tv series, some of which were "Dark Holiday", *The Vision* (1987), *Eleanor: In Her Own Words* (1986), *Emma's War* (1986), "Toughlove", "Faerie Tale Theatre", *The Competition* (1980), "The Women's Room", *Haywire* (1980), *The Europeans* (1979), *The Medusa Touch/ La Grande Menace* (1978), *Breaking Up* (1978), *Telefon* (1977), *The Omen* (1976), *Touch Me Not* (1974), "QB VII", "Hallmark Hall of Fame", *Loot* (1970), *Hard Contract* (1969), *The Detective* (1968), *No Way to Treat a Lady* (1968), *Damn Yankees!* (1967), *The Hallelujah Trail* (1965), *Baby the Rain Must Fall* (1965), *The Wheeler Dealers* (1963), *The Running Man* (1963), *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962), *Experiment in Terror* (1962), *Sanctuary* (1961), *Wild River* (1960), *The Tempest* (1960), *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959), *These Thousand Hills* (1959), *The Long, Hot Summer* (1958), "Playhouse 90", "Kraft Television Theatre", *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), "Robert Montgomery Presents", "Studio One", and "Armstrong Circle Theatre."

R.G. ARMSTRONG (7 April 1917, Birmingham, Alabama) is a well-known character actor who has appears in 189 films and tv series, among them: *The Waking* (2001), "Millennium", *The Man in the Iron Mask* (1998), *Invasion of Privacy* (1996), *Payback* (1995), "Walker, Texas Ranger", *Warlock: The Armageddon* (1993), "L.A. Law", *Dick Tracy* (1990), "Matlock" "War and Remembrance", "Beauty and the Beast", *Ghetto Blaster* (1989), *Bulletproof* (1988), *Predator* (1987), *Independence* (1987), *Jocks* (1987), "Trapper John, M.D.", "Matt Houston" *Children of the Corn* (1984), *Lone Wolf McQuade* (1983), "The Dukes of Hazzard" "Dynasty", *Hammitt* (1982), *The Beast Within* (1982), *Reds* (1981), *The Pursuit of D.B. Cooper* (1981), *Where the Buffalo Roam* (1980), "Charlie's Angels", *The Last Ride of the Dalton Gang* (1979), "Fantasy Island", "Vega\$", *Heaven Can Wait* (1978), "Baretta", "Starsky and Hutch", *Race with the Devil* (1975), "The Manhunter", "McMillan & Wife" "Marcus Welby, M.D.", "Cannon", *White Lightning* (1973), *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid* (1973), "Hec Ramsey", *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid* (1972), *J.W. Coop* (1972), "Hawaii Five-O", "The High Chaparral", *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* (1970), *80 Steps to Jonah* (1969), "The Doris Day Show", "Daniel Boone", "The Guns of Will Sonnett", "Gunsmoke", "Felony Squad", "The F.B.I.", "The Virginian", "Bonanza", "The Big Valley", "The Fugitive", "Rawhide", "Death Valley Days", *Major Dundee* (1965), "Kraft

Suspense Theatre", "The Alfred Hitchcock Hour", "Laramie", "Perry Mason", "Wagon Train", *Ride the High Country* (1962), "Alfred Hitchcock Presents", "General Electric Theater", "The Twilight Zone", "The Andy Griffith Show", "Cheyenne", "The Westerner", "Maverick", *The Fugitive Kind* (1959), *No Name on the Bullet* (1959), "Zane Grey Theater", "The Rifleman", "Have Gun - Will Travel", *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *Baby Doll* (1956), "West Point", and *Garden of Eden* (1954).

BROWNIE MCGHEE (30 November 1915, Knoxville, Tennessee, USA—16 February 1996, Oakland, California) is best known as a blues singer, especially for his long collaboration with harmonica-player Sonny Terry. He appeared in one tv episode ("Family Ties", 1988) and three other films: *Angel Heart* (1987) *The Jerk* (1979), *Le Blues entre les dents/ Blues Under the Skin* (1973).

RIP TORN (6 February 1931, Temple, Texas) was nominated for best supporting actor in *Cross Creek* (1983). He has been in 179 films and tv series and is as active as ever, with two films in production (*Cat Tale*, 2010 and *Funny Peculiar*, 2008), one filming (*Bridge of Names* 2009), and five in post-production: *Happy Tears* (2009), *American Cowslip* (2008), *The Afterlight* (2008), and *The Legend of Awesomest Maximus/National Lampoon's The Legend Of Awesomest Maximus* (2008). He recently appeared in five episodes of "30 Rock" and appeared in 89 episodes of "The Larry Sanders Show" (1992-1998). Some of his other roles were: *August* (2008), *Chatham* (2008), *Turn the River* (2007), "Law & Order: Criminal Intent", *Zoom* (2006), *Yours, Mine and Ours* (2005), *The Sisters* (2005), *Forty Shades of Blue* (2005), *Eulogy* (2004), *Welcome to Mooseport* (2004), "Will & Grace", *Men in Black II* (2002), *Freddy Got Fingered* (2001), *Men in Black Alien Attack* (2000), *Wonder Boys* (2000), *Men in Black* (1997), *Down Periscope* (1996), *How to Make an American Quilt* (1995), *Canadian Bacon* (1995), *For Better or Worse* (1995), *RoboCop 3* (1993), *Beyond the Law* (1992), *Defending Your Life* (1991), *Nadine* (1987), *J. Edgar Hoover* (1987), "The Atlanta Child Murders", *City Heat* (1984), *Cross Creek* (1983), *The Beastmaster* (1982), *A Stranger Is Watching* (1982), *One Trick Pony* (1980), *A Shining Season* (1979), *Heartland* (1979), *The Seduction of Joe Tynan* (1979), *Coma* (1978), *The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover* (1977), *Nasty Habits* (1977), *The Man Who Fell to Earth* (1976), *Crazy Joe* (1974), *The President's Plane Is Missing* (1973), "Mannix", "Bonanza", *Tropic of Cancer* (1970), *Maidstone* (1970), *Beyond the Law* (1968/1), *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965), "Rawhide", "The Man from U.N.C.L.E.", "12 O'Clock High", "Dr. Kildare", "Karl Kasten", "Route 66", "The Untouchables", *Sweet Bird of Youth* (1962), "Naked City", "Alfred Hitchcock Presents", "Playhouse 90", *Pork Chop Hill* (1959), "Hallmark Hall of Fame", "Kraft Television Theatre", "The United States Steel Hour", "The Restless Gun", *Time Limit* (1957), "The Alcoa Hour", *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), "The Kaiser Aluminum Hour", and *Baby Doll* (1956).

GAYNE RESCHER (1925, NYC 29 February 2008, Gig Harbor, Washington) was cinematographer for 75 films, most of them made-for-TV. Some of his theatrical films were *Star Trek: The Wrath of Khan* (1982), *Olly, Olly, Oxen Free* (1978), *Claudine*

(1974), *Such Good Friends* (1971), *John and Mary* (1969), *Rachel, Rachel* (1968), *The Troublemaker* (1964), *The Doctor and the Playgirl* (1963), *Mad Dog Coll* (1961), *Fiend of Dope Island* (1961), *Murder, Inc.* (1960), *Man on a String* (1960), *Windjammer: The Voyage of the Christian Radich* (1958), *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), and *The Miracle of Todd-AO* (1956).



HARRY STRADLING SR. (1 September 1901, Newark, New Jersey—14 February 1970, Hollywood, California) is credited as cinematographer or director of photography on 133 films. He was nominated for 14 best cinematography Oscars (and won two of them, indicated by asterisks): *Hello, Dolly!* (1969), *Funny Girl* (1968), *My Fair Lady** (1964), *Gypsy* (1962), *A Majority of One* (1961), *The Young Philadelphians* (1959), *Auntie Mame* (1958), *The Eddy Duching Story* (1956), *Guys and Dolls* (1955), *Hans Christian Andersen* (1952), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), *The Barkleys of Broadway* (1949), *The Picture of*

*Dorian Gray** (1945), and *The Human Comedy* (1943). Some of his other films were: *The Owl and the Pussycat* (1970), *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* (1970), *My Fair Lady* (1964)*, *Mary, Mary* (1963), *Gypsy* (1962), *Five Finger Exercise* (1962), *The Dark at the Top of the Stairs* (1960), *Who Was That Lady?* (1960), *A Summer Place* (1959), *The Young Philadelphians* (1959), *Marjorie Morningstar* (1958), *The Pajama Game* (1957), *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *The Eddy Duchin Story* (1956), *Johnny Guitar* (1954), *A Lion Is in the Streets* (1953), *Angel Face* (1952), *My Son John* (1952), *Valentino* (1951), *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949), *Words and Music* (1948), *Easter Parade* (1948), *The Pirate* (1948), *Till the Clouds Roll By* (1946), *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1945)*, *Bathing Beauty* (1944), *Song of Russia* (1944), *Maisie Gets Her Man* (1942), *Mr. and Mrs. North* (1942), *The Corsican Brothers* (1941), *Suspicion* (1941), *The Devil and Miss Jones* (1941), *They Knew What They Wanted* (1940), *The Citadel* (1938), *Pygmalion* (1938), *Dark Journey* (1937), *La Dame aux camélias* (1934), *Le Maître de forges* (1933), *Ride 'em Cowboy* (1930), *Lucky in Love* (1929), *The Nest* (1927), *Secrets of Paris* (1922), *Jim the Penman* (1921), *The Great Adventure* (1921), and *The Devil's Garden* (1920).

GENE MILFORD (19 January 1902, Lamar, Colorado—23 December 1991, Santa Monica, California pneumonia), won two Oscars for Best Film Editing: *On the Waterfront* (1954), and *Lost Horizon* (1937); he was nominated for *One Night of Love* (1934). He edited 105 theatrical and TV films, Some of his other theatrical films were: *The Klansman* (1974), *There Was a Crooked Man* (1970), *The Great Bank Robbery* (1969), *Wait Until Dark* (1967), *Texas Across the River* (1966), *The Chase* (1966), *Taras Bulba* (1962), *Splendor in the Grass* (1961), *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), *Baby Doll* (1956), *Man with My Face* (1951), *Having Wonderful Crime* (1945), *The Falcon in Hollywood* (1944), *The Falcon Out West* (1944), *Confessions of Boston Blackie* (1941), *Tillie the Toiler* (1941), *Blondie Plays Cupid* (1940), *Coast Guard* (1939), *Frontier Pony Express* (1939), *The Mikado* (1939), *The Overland Express* (1938), *Mr. Boggs Steps Out* (1938), *Tarzan's Revenge* (1938), (as Eugene Milford), *The League of Frightened Men* (1937), *Too Tough to Kill* (1935), *Grand Exit* (1935), *The Public Menace* (1935), *Carnival* (1935), *Let's Fall in Love* (1933), *McKenna of the*

Mounted (1932), *Platinum Blonde* (1931), *The Texas Ranger* (1931), *The Masked Angel* (1928), *Free Lips* (1928), *Comrades* (1928), *Say It with Diamonds* (1927), and *Two Can Play* (1926).

Elia Kazan, from *World Film Directors Vol. II*. Ed. John Wakeman. H.W. Wilson Co., NY, 1988.



American stage and film director, actor, and novelist, born in Constantinople (now Istanbul) to Greek parents, George and Athena (Sismanoglou) Kazanjoglou. His father was a rug merchant who moved the family first to Berlin, then back to Constantinople and then (when Kazan was four) to New York City. There the family lived in a Greek neighborhood until moving on to New Rochelle, where Kazan attended public school, generally considering himself socially isolated and reading extensively on his own. He enrolled in Williams

College in 1926, graduated *cum laude* in English, and with his stated career goal being only “to avoid my father’s business” went on to Yale Drama School, where he met and married Molly Day Thatcher. He left Yale without completing the two-year course of study, and today characterizes himself at that time as alienated from upper-class students around him. He was drawn, instead, to the bohemian life-style and innovative artistic approach of Harold Clurman and Lee Strasburg’s Group Theater in New York, where, says Kazan, “the whole idea was to get poetry out of the common things.” He started at the Group Theater as a backstage apprentice in 1933, occasionally performing bit parts to undistinguished reviews until he was cast as the lower-class cab driver in Clifford Odets’ *Waiting for Lefty*, a role in which Kazan’s New York accent and nervous intensity convinced audiences that he was a real cab driver hired off the street. Such realism, a primary goal of the Stanislavsky Method of acting to which the Group Theater adhered, was to be a major part of Kazan’s working style throughout his career, and he calls joining the Group Theater one of the most important events of his life: “I worked like a maniac...I took the Stanislavsky training with utmost seriousness...I thought of the roles mostly psychologically...(analyzing) the main drive of a character, and from the main drive there were stems, the ‘beats’ that would build up the whole part.”

Kazan began directing for the Group Theater in 1938 and continued to act and teach acting for the New Theater League, appearing as well in two Ralph Steiner films, one a symbolic anti-war piece and the other a somewhat improvisational work about two tramps that developed Kazan’s interest in shooting on location. In 1934 Kazan had joined a cell of the Communist Party that included several members of the Group Theater. Though he remained a member for less than two years, this affiliation ultimately colored the entire second half of his career after his testimony before the House Un-American Activities Committee in

1952. His recollection of the cell’s activities include a planned takeover of the Group Theater that Kazan described in retrospect as “treacherous.”

After directing the short documentary *People of the Cumberland* for Frontier Films in 1937 and acting in two films by Anatole Litvak (*City for Conquest*, a 1940 gangster film, and *Blues in the Night*, a 1941 picture about a white blues band), Kazan received a particularly unflattering review of his acting (in which he was described as “studiously spontaneous”) which prompted him to abruptly and completely give up that aspect of his career. Kazan traveled to New Guinea and the Philippines in 1943 as a civilian adviser to the Army on soldier entertainment, and returned to the United States to continue directing for the stage. The Group Theater folded in 1941, but Kazan and other proponents of Method acting founded the Actors Studio in 1947. Kazan described the Method’s importance as a “revolt against the heroic, romantic rhetorical theater,” and despite criticism that the Method “induced neurosis” in its actors and promoted the “dirty-fingernail” school of acting, the Actors Studio garnered acclaim. Kazan’s direction of Thornton Wilder’s *the Skin of Our Teeth*, Arthur Miller’s *All My Sons*, and Tennessee Williams’ *A Streetcar Named Desire* established him as a powerful and creative interpreter of contemporary drama, and it was partly for their own prestige that 20th Century-Fox invited Kazan to direct a feature film in 1945.

A Tree Grows in Brooklyn was based on Betty Smith’s novel about a poor girl growing up in New York. appropriately, it is a story of great emotion and little action, for Kazan admitted that he knew nothing about Hollywood film techniques, and thus handled the movie as though it was a stage production, using only two medium-distance shots (“the extent of the movement is just two lips moving,” as Kazan later described it) and emphasis on character development. Peggy Ann Garner was cast as the young heroine, and Kazan said of her later that “she was not pretty at all, or cute, or picturesque, only true. James Agee, though he found the film pat and prettified in its representation of poverty, and at times psychologically glib, praised Kazan’s sense of detail, suspecting that some of the film’s problems may have rested with the original book. James Hillier, comparing *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn* with other contemporary films of immigrant life such as Minelli’s *Meet Me in St. Louis* and Stevens’ *I Remember Mama* found that “only Kazan makes this a matter of any moment.”

In 1946 Kazan made the epic *Sea of Grass* for MGM Studios. The script about a 19th-century land baron (Spencer Tracy) and his discontented wife (Katherine Hepburn) appealed to Kazan as “the classic American story...the pioneers who came there and took the country over are gradually ousted by the farmers, the bourgeois and safe people,” but the director soon found that MGM was not interested in showing class struggles, but rather the beauty of the American landscape. Much of the picture was pieced together from rear-projected footage taken without Kazan’s involvement and he found the end product to be too sweet and entertainment-oriented. Though its ambiguous ending (there is no clear victor in the struggle for the land) foreshadows Kazan’s later narrative preferences, James Hillier found *Sea of Grass* to be “more interesting on the level of ideas than execution,” and most critics agree that it is a forgettable film.

Kazan saw his next feature, *Boomerang!* (1947), as a reaction to *Sea of Grass* and the whole Hollywood esthetic that placed mass approval above all artistic or political criteria. Miserable in California (“I never unpacked my bags”), Kazan shot *Boomerang!* as a semi-documentary on location in Connecticut. It

is the story of an actual murder case of 1924 in which a Bridgeport man (here played by Arthur Kennedy) is wrongly accused of the crime, and to film it Kazan abandoned the back-lighting and halo-lighting techniques he had learned for *Sea of Grass* and simply “turned on the camera.” *Boomerang!* used local non-actors and focused on psychological developments, rather than plot, for suspense. One critic wrote that “the real culture is laughably obvious...but Kazan has given fresh thought to the methods of the police and the reporter.” Kazan now sees *Boomerang!* as lacking in content and emotional depth but says its realistic texture led to his later, more interesting films, such as *Panic in the Streets*, *On the Waterfront* and *Wild River*.

Daryl Zanuck kept Kazan working on “problem” pictures at Fox—films about the flaws of the justice system, racism, corruption—and for Kazan’s next directorial effort, Zanuck and Moss Hart developed a script from *Gentleman’s Agreement*, Laura Hobson’s 1947 best-selling novel about a reporter who pretends to be Jewish in order to expose anti-Semitism. Gregory Peck, Celeste Holm and John Garfield were praised for their performances, and James Agee said of the film that “it never tries to get beyond the very good best that good journalistic artists can do, but on that level it is a triumph, a perfect job.” The film won Academy Awards for best direction and best picture of 1948, and the New York Film Critics Award for direction, but Kazan had the same complaint about *Gentleman’s Agreement* that he had about his previous Hollywood ventures: he thought that the film “looked like an illustration for *Cosmopolitan*...” and that “it surprised people, but it didn’t shock them.”

Even less satisfying for Kazan was *Pinky* (1949) which he completed for Fox after John Ford suddenly withdrew from the project. Jeanne Crain, a white actress, was cast as a light-skinned black woman at odds with her family and community because she has chosen to pass for white. The film was made entirely on sound stages, in a period of seven weeks, and Kazan called it a “total dodge...a pastiche,” agreeing much later with critics who found his early characters generally to lack believable motivation despite the intensity of their emotions on screen. Finally, in 1950, Kazan determined to stop making prettified films (that seemed not to be guaranteed box-office success anyway) and allowed his fascination with the darker side of human nature to take free rein. James Hillier noted that Kazan’s “progress inwards, toward the individual, led him to greater perceptions of society.”

For many critics, *Panic in the Streets* (1950) marked Kazan’s passage into a more ambitiously cinematic phase as well. Kazan called the film a liberation for himself, a graduation from “being a director of dialog to a director of pictures,” and for this movie about a fugitive murderer infected with bubonic plague, Kazan had photographer Joseph Macdonald use many long shots (Kazan had admired their use in Ford’s *Young Mr. Lincoln*) with significant props appearing in the foreground and a constantly moving camera. Kazan added a wealth of sound effects and

thoroughly exploited his sinister New Orleans locations, developing his outdoor technique under the influence of Italian neorealism, newly popular in the US, and his long-standing interest in classic films such as *Potemkin* and *Aerograd*. Hollis Alpert praised *Panic in the Streets*’ “tight screenwriting, the fashioning of a chain of causation that allows no lag in audience belief,” but others felt that the film’s dramatic center was not the chase, but the convincing relationship between the medical examiner (Richard Widmark) and the police captain (Paul Douglas). David Shipman praised Kazan’s growing control of the medium, writing that Kazan had “added to the city’s chiaroscuro harsh natural sound and furious editing, suggesting a corner of life as experienced by someone with raw and ragged nerves.”

In 1951, Kazan filmed *A Streetcar Named Desire* with a cast from the original stage production that included Vivien Leigh, Kim Hunter and Marlon Brando. Though Kazan did not particularly want to work on something he had already examined for the stage, his great affection for Tennessee Williams led him to create what Shipman has called “a masterwork in some indefinable middle ground which is neither stage or screen.” Critics praised the great visual expressiveness of the film (photographed by Harry Stradling), and though some censorship was exercised on the final product, Kazan thought the film captured the essence of the play: “The attraction you have for someone who’s on the other side, supposedly dead against you, but whose violence and force attract you. Now that’s the essence of ambiguity.”

The sheer intensity for which Kazan strove, however, was seen as a stumbling block by some critics who noted the film’s fragmented and ultimately monotonous effect. This was seen as a



recurrent stylistic problem in Kazan’s work of the 1950s, and Lloyd Michaels located its source in Kazan’s reliance on psychological ferocity: “(Kazan’s) difficulty sustaining continuity...apparently stems from his self-acknowledged habit of resolving his uncertainties about a particular scene by making it more forceful, driving it to its own specific climax.” This was cited as a particular problem with *Viva Zapata!* (1952), a film about the Mexican Revolution. Kazan described his design for the film as one learned from watching Rossellini’s *Paisan*—the building of tension not by slowly

accumulating information but rather by quickly cutting from one pivotal event to another, or, as Kazan put it, by “jumping from crag to crag, rather than going through the valleys.” The film does leap from one dramatic confrontation to another, relying on quick impressions (many of the scenes were duplicated exactly from period photographs), but John Smith felt that Kazan’s choppy texture approached overkill, writing that “so powerful is Kazan’s sense of concreteness that we are constantly being stopped short by some look or gesture or tone of voice, some physical detail.” But whatever stylistic or narrative intentions Kazan may have been pursuing with *Viva Zapata!*, they were thoroughly eclipsed by the film’s reception as a political statement, the first of several films Kazan made during the Cold War period that have been seen

as evidence of his regret about early allegiance to the Communist Party.

Though a film version of Zapata's life had been in development in one studio or another since the 1930s, Kazan and writer John Steinbeck had struggled for nearly two years to work out an approach that would be acceptable to McCarthy-era sensibilities, without entailing gross historical inaccuracy. The film they made shows Zapata, an illiterate peasant of instinctive nobility, leading a grass-roots revolution that sweeps a corrupt government from power. Installed as head of the new government, he is troubled to see the old abuses returning under different names. He retires to private life, but he is now a living reproach to his former comrades and they kill him. (His white horse escapes into the hills, and into legend.) Wearing heavy makeup and further handicapped by Steinbeck's quasi-biblical dialogue, Marlon Brando gave a stiff but dignified performance as Zapata, for which he won an award at Cannes; Anthony Quinn, who played Zapata's rowdy brother, won an Oscar. But this elegiac account of revolution betrayed angered the Mexican government, which withdrew support for the film, and also struck some American critics as impossibly soft-centered. Paul Vanderwood sees Kazan and Steinbeck's film as accommodating a repressive national atmosphere: "What began as an endorsement of revolution with determined leadership as the means to social change ended up as a rejection of power, strong leadership and rebellion in favor of grass-roots democracy which promises little, if any, change at all." Kazan defended the treatment, saying at the time that Steinbeck's "angle has great value for our thinking today." Although the film is most often discussed as a fascinating document of Cold War America, it is a visually striking work and has had periodic cult revivals. "Zapata may have been killed, Kazan may have named names," Leo Braudy wrote during one of these. "But the horse, the image, Brando as a star, live beyond the film—perhaps to infuse the more personal politics of the 1960s."

"Naming names" refers to the most controversial act of Kazan's career, his decision to become a "friendly witness" before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee in April 1952. Throughout the late 1940s and early 1950s, as anti-Communist

sensibilities intensified, there was tremendous public and government pressure on Hollywood to produce overtly pro-American films and to ostracize any members of the community who may have had hidden Communist leanings. Studio owners generally refused to hire actors, writers and directors who were at all suspect, and blacklisting was rampant. In this atmosphere Kazan was called to testify before HUAC. His friends on the beleaguered Left hoped that he would defy the Committee and test the power of the blacklist, but he not only denounced his own early involvement with the Party but named colleagues who had not come forward themselves. He was instantly reviled by many friends and co-workers, and rushed to explain himself to those who thought he was only participating in the Red scare to

protect his career. In an open letter to the *New York Times* Kazan described how he had been misled by the Communist Party, praised the work of the Committee, and urged fellow liberals to follow his lead. It was perhaps this letter, even more than his testimony, that earned him the undying scorn of the Left.

Kazan's next film was overtly anti-Communist, and the director looks back on it as a limited artistic undertaking. *Man on a Tightrope* (1953) is about a Czech circus star (Frederic March) pursued and persecuted by the state. The subject was suggested to Kazan by Zanuck, and despite a notable performance by Adolph Menjou as an unappealing propaganda minister, the film was called an "indifferent chase thriller." Kazan himself saw its romantic aspects as particularly "preposterous," and Lloyd Michaels, while praising the climactic escape sequence (based on a real event) as "skillful and exciting cinema," said that the "talky political dialogues...simply will not play."

With *On the Waterfront* (1954), perhaps Kazan's best-known film, the director returned to more ambitious characterizations while retaining a somewhat defensive moral tone—here about the merits of informing. Budd Schulberg wrote the script after reading a series of articles on mob control of the New York docks and spending months living with members of the waterfront community. Kazan and Schulberg had a great deal of difficulty getting the film produced (Harry Cohn insisted that "mob control" be changed to "Communist control"), but finally they found a backer in independent producer Sam Spiegel. Shooting on location in Brooklyn and Hoboken, Kazan and his cinematographer Boris Kaufman established a mood of barren, urban drudgery and oppressive fear. Marlon Brando plays Terry Malloy, a dockworker who is deeply disturbed by the corruption around him, and Eva Marie Saint and Karl Malden the girlfriend and priest who encourage him to inform to a crime commission. The movie's forward claimed that the film "would exemplify the way self-appointed tyrants can be defeated by right-thinking people in a vital democracy" and many critics saw the piece as naive, finding its supposedly realistic handling of organized crime to be defeated by the way it simplistically "circumscribed the tumor of corruption." Kazan's detractors saw something worse: a

maddeningly self-serving allegory of recent history, one that presented the act of testifying to committee as heroic and the people testified against as criminals. Near the end of the film, Malloy, badly beaten by the mob, rises to stumble, martyr-like, down the quay, and here Jonathan Rosenbaum felt that the personal subtext had affected the balance of the film: "It is impossible for most spectators to feel...that the hero's status as an informer justifies the radical foreshortening of his character from a complex human being—perhaps Marlon Brando's densest and most fully realized role—to an icon of a suffering Christ...Unless one is obsessed with the idea of informing as the film implies one ought to be, the final emphasis is bound to seem somewhat false and misleading." Other critics have pointed out that Malloy does



not actually take his moral stand until the mobsters have killed his brother, which rather stacks the deck; Peter Biskind thinks that “*Waterfront* is one of the earliest and most effective attempts to suppress politics with morality and private values that the ‘50s produced.”

But criticisms of this sort were hardly audible in the chorus of praise that greeted the film on release, and most moviegoers, unconcerned with ideological debate, thoroughly enjoyed the picture: it was an exciting contemporary drama of moral awakening, expressively photographed in a gritty, unfamiliar milieu, and it featured a definitive performance by Brando as the sensitive tough. *On the Waterfront* broke box-office records and won eight Oscars, including best, picture, best director, and best actor. John Smith said that the “central character is genuinely an individual, sensitively and coherently realized,” and when Lindsay Anderson wrote an extensive condemnation of the film as vulgar and theatrical, many critics and viewers rose to its defense. Pauline Kael ultimately wrote of the controversial picture that, “If one regrets that the artists have created an authentic image of alienation, failed to take that image seriously enough, one remembers also that most films offer no experience at all.”

After *On the Waterfront*, Kazan turned from the harsher, more mechanical look of the anti-Communist pictures to a less dogmatic theme and more lyrical approach. *East of Eden* (1955) was filmed in color and CinemaScope from the final third of John Steinbeck’s novel of the same name, a lengthy retelling of the Cain and Abel myth set in the Salinas Valley at the beginning of [the twentieth] century. James Dean and Richard Davalos played Cal and Aron, Raymond Massey their domineering father and Jo Van Fleet (who won an Academy Award for best supporting actress), their errant mother. According to David Shipman, “the use of color and CinemaScope complete the impression of trivial situations being treated in epic proportions,” but François Truffaut found the use of color and the dramatically tilted camera to be quite affecting. Though Kazan was repeatedly accused of directing Dean to imitate Marlon Brando’s mumbling, in-turned acting style, Dean’s performance was said to “galvanize” the picture, particularly in the scene of Cal’s rampage in the ice house upon seeing his brother with the woman they both love. Also often praised is the passage in which Aron, the “good” brother, smashes his head through the window of a troop train upon realizing that his mother is a prostitute. James Hillier called this moment “grotesquely violent (but stylistically absolutely justifiable)...an image of total shattering.” Lee Rogow’s impression represents the most common critical perception of *East of Eden*: a “sprawling, lurid, old-fashioned, generally unaffectionate movie.”

Working again from a play by Tennessee Williams, Kazan made *Baby Doll* in 1956, casting in it many members of the Actors Studio, including Karl Malden and Eli Wallach as two men competing for the affections of Malden’s child bride (played by Carroll Baker). The film is essentially a portrait of a dissolute and depressed South, in which whites destroy themselves with greed and anger. Much of the film is languid in pacing and bleached out in appearance, with the only emotional and visual contrast coming from the blacks and the Italians who bring “new blood” to the Old South. Kazan liked *Baby Doll* and saw it as a more “mature and complicated” portrayal of evil and bigotry than he had achieved in *East of Eden*, but it had limited box-office success, in part because Cardinal Spellman and the Legion of Decency loudly condemned it before its release.

In 1957 Kazan made *A Face in the Crowd*, another

commentary on American culture and politics. Andy Griffith plays Lonesome Rhodes, a down-and-out country singer “discovered” by a reporter (Patricia Neal) in Arkansas and molded into a wildly popular television personality. Rhodes becomes a complete megalomaniac along the way and is hired to teach the secrets of his charisma to a presidential candidate. There has been speculation that Rhodes’ character was based on everyone from Will Rogers to Arthur Godfrey to Huey Long, and Kazan spared no naturalistic detail to create the impression that, as William Zinsser put it, “the American people will embrace any pitchman with a genial personality and a string of rustic aphorisms.” Though Rhodes is eventually revealed as a greedy misanthrope and abandoned by his public, John Yates saw *Face in the Crowd* as somewhat snobbish, as evidence that Kazan and Schulberg were embarrassed by McCarthyism, television and the whole “mass somnambulism of American culture” in the 1950s; “Democracy in *Face* works,” Yates said, “but only if the right people, the liberal intellectuals, can somehow sneak into the control room.” The film was not well-liked by audiences, and Kazan himself finally termed it “over-explicit.”

Kazan’s renditions of the American experience went through more and less positive phases. The film that is generally thought to combine his mixed feelings about this “living democracy” most successfully is *Wild River* (1960), another Cinemascope production. Kazan had tried for some time to write a script about the TVA, but finally turned his ideas over to Paul Osborne, who wrote about a government representative (Montgomery Clift) confronting the obstinate local population in his attempts to build a dam that would destroy their land and community. Michael Walker praised the photography (by Ellsworth Frederick) as magnificent, and others felt that the film’s horizontality conveyed the countryside’s majesty and tranquility. But the characterizations were again seen as the most developed aspect of *Wild River*; Lee Remick and Jo Van Fleet play the very strong, self-contained women, and for Kazan, these characters represented the “values of the simple life” that lead Chuck, the urban intellectual, to revise his priorities profoundly. Kazan called the film “one of the one or two purest I have made.”

Kazan continued in the 1960s to use social mores and pressures as backdrops against which his characters could attain self-awareness. *Splendor in the Grass* (1961) took as its setting small-town America, on the verge of the stock market crash and facing the sexual upheavals of the flapper era. Within this setting, Kazan, working from an Oscar-winning screenplay by William Inge, placed two appealing and confused young lovers, played by Natalie Wood and Warren Beatty in what were widely felt to be stunning performances. The two are kept from having sexual relations by the fearful repressive morality of their parents, who are fiercely concerned with public opinion and wealth. The girl suffers a nervous breakdown under her conflicting urges, and critics pointed out that *Splendor*’s premise that one could go crazy from a lack of sex as ungrounded as the Victorian notion that one could go crazy from having too much sex. But Kazan explained that Deanie “went mad because she wanted to fulfill her meaning as a person in a physical way,” a patent impossibility to the highly psychological Kazan. The last scene of *Splendor in the Grass* shows the two young lovers reunited—she having just returned from the institution where she recovered from her nervous breakdown, he now married to another woman—in a particularly tender and erotic moment that captures Kazan’s skill with ensemble acting. The film is long and nerve-wracking, but undeniably effective. Robin Wood wrote that “*Splendor* refuses to

be merely written off: if it is impossible to watch without embarrassment, it is also impossible to watch without admiration.” He found it at times crude and overbearing, but possessing a “sense of driving passion that one can’t separate from the almost unremitting stridency of tone.”

Kazan continued to direct for the Broadway stage while making films and was appointed in 1959 to develop and run the new Lincoln Center Repertory Theater. He also began writing novels in the early ‘60s, and two of them, *America, America* and *The Arrangement*, were made into films (in 1963 and 1969 respectively). *America, America* was about a young Greek trying to emigrate from Turkey to the US at the turn of the century; the character was based on Kazan’s uncle and played by the 21-year-old unknown, Stathis Giallelis. Though V.F. Perkins thought that the film held too closely to the book, and was therefore too episodic, he also felt that “Kazan embedded the attraction of the dream of the clean sweep, eradication of the past, in a film which insists on unending confrontations with history, personal and national.” James Fixx called it a “ruggedly iconoclastic film,” and Robin Wood said that even though *America, America* suffered from the same, heavy problematological rhetoric of *Viva Zapata!* and *On the Waterfront*, “the creative elan, which seems never to flag throughout a very long and apparently diffuse film, and which informs with positive energy even the most bitter and disparate scenes, springs from a deeper source”—Kazan’s notion of himself as an outsider settling in America.

The Arrangement, starring Kirk Douglas as a second-generation Greek-American, was made during an unhappy period in Kazan’s life (the director was recently widowed and at a low ebb in his professional popularity) and was, as John Smith pointed out, “top-heavy with ideas that do not coalesce into a whole.” The main character, a middle-age advertising executive, is deeply disturbed about his career and marriage, and suicidal. Lloyd Michaels wrote that Kazan’s direction (comprised of quick cuts and continual flashbacks) had “diminished artistic effect, perhaps because the link between the usual style and the protagonist’s nervous breakdown seem so obvious.” But Smith conceded that Kazan had complete control of our sympathies throughout the film, and Robin Wood added that “*The Arrangement* survives on the detailed character of the actors which intermittently transcend the banality of the ideas.”

Though both *America, America* and *The Arrangement* had been best-selling novels, neither film was financially successful, and Kazan’s next projects removed him by necessity or choice, from the mainstream of Hollywood filmmaking. He worked at length with Budd Schulberg in the early 1970s, on a screenplay of Oscar Lewis’ *La Vida*, a book about poor Hispanic families, despite awareness that “no one wants to do films with social themes anymore.” *The Visitors* (1971) was written by Kazan’s son Christopher and shot in 16mm at the director’s country home in Connecticut for \$136,000. It is a disturbing story about three Vietnam veterans (one of the very few films on the subject at the time), and though Kazan greatly resented the fact that it was never released, he found it to be a return to basics for himself; “At Frontier Films...I used to carry a tripod. And this winter, up in the



snow where we were shooting, I carried a tripod again.”

Throughout the 1970s, Kazan continued to write novels that sold well, enjoying his freedom from Hollywood pressures, but in 1976 he accepted the task of directing *The Last Tycoon*, a film adaptation by Harold Pinter of Fitzgerald’s unfinished novel that the original director, Mike Nichols, had abandoned midstream. The film traced the decline of a Hollywood film producer (a character Fitzgerald had based on MGM’s Irving Thalberg) and despite its cast (Robert DeNiro, Robert Mitchum, Jeanne Moreau and Jack Nicholson among other stars) it made almost no money. Kazan’s *Last Tycoon* focused on the novel’s love affair and glamorous settings while neglecting Fitzgerald’s nuances about wealth and power at work in the realm of art, and the picture was called “handsome but lethargic.” As Kazan put it: “Harold is a master of understatement, but I think he understated too much in this case.”

Kazan, a small man with kinky white hair and large features, has always been described as energetic and enthused and was long ago nicknamed “Gadget” for his nonstop activity. He now sees himself, however, as “nicer, gentler, quieter,” and critical opinion of the often polemical Kazan has mellowed as well; in the last ten years, Kazan has been granted lifetime achievement awards, numerous film and stage retrospectives and scholarly coverage in major film journals. Long pointed to as the embodiment of the cinematic *auteur*, he has influenced such New York-based filmmakers as Sidnet

Lumet, John Cassavetes and Martin Scorsese. Among his contributions to American cinema are the idea that leading men can be both sexual and vulnerable and a degree of social realism that is part of the “definition” of American film. Lloyd Michaels said of Kazan that “during a decade and a half (1950-65) of anxiety, gimmickry and entropy in Hollywood, Kazan remained one of the few American directors who continued to believe in cinema as a medium for artistic expression and who brought forth films that consistently reflected his own creative vision.” Michael Ciment, though condemning Kazan’s political actions of the 1950s, noted a “progressive movement by which Kazan has become a lucid and courageous witness of our times.” Kazan himself looks back on the HUAC episode as a painful necessity, still believing that the Communists posed a real threat and citing contemporary soviet-bloc oppression of artists and writers. Living in New York City and Connecticut with his third wife, writer Frances Rudge (Molly Day Thatcher, with whom Kazan had four children, died in 1963; he was also married to actress Barbara Loden, who died in 1969), Kazan continues to work on fiction and his own memoirs, looking back on a body of work which he once described elegantly: “Poetic realism, I call it, when I’m in an egghead mood.”

from *Conversations with the Great Moviemakers of Hollywood’s Golden Age at the American Film Institute.* George Stevens, Jr. Knopf, NY, 2006.

“The key word in art—it’s an ugly word but it’s a necessary word—is *power*, your own power. Power to say, ‘I’m going to bend you to my will.’ However you disguise it, you’re gripping someone’s throat. You’re saying, ‘My dear, this is the

way it's going to be.”

Kazan was born Eia Kazanjoglou. His parents were Anatolian Greeks, and the influences of his youth come alive in *America, America*, which included the memorable shipboard scene of immigrants passing the Statue of Liberty. As a young man in New York, Kazan joined the Communist Party for a short time, and most of his films were concerned with social issues, starting with *Gentleman's Agreement*, which dealt with anti-Semitism, and *Pinky*, one of the first films to address racial prejudice. ...

In 1999 the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences voted to present Kazan with a special award, which stirred the coals of the still-smoldering controversy over his having named names before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1954. Kazan's enemies came out of the woodwork and urged Academy members not to applaud when he came onstage. I was at the Oscar ceremony that night because our film *The Thin Red Line* had been nominated for Best Picture. I was sitting in the row behind Warren Beatty. We had discussed the controversy but didn't declare our intentions. Robert DeNiro and Martin Scorsese presented a montage of Kazan's work and introduced him. It seemed less than half the audience was applauding as he walked to center stage. Warren and I got to our feet; then gradually others in our section and a fairly good representation throughout the auditorium arose. It was at best a bittersweet moment. I never discussed it with Warren, but I believe we were both standing for the same reason—out of regard for the creativity, the stamina and the many fierce battles and lonely nights that had gone into the man's twenty motion pictures.

October 8, 1975 interview

You have a reputation for discovering stars and for not being afraid to use untrained actors. What do you look for in a performer?

Very often big stars are barely trained or not very well trained. They also have bad habits. They don't want to look bad and they protect themselves, or they're not pliable anymore. They know what their act is. If I put them in a scene that's a little bit dangerous, their agents come to see me. I get annoyed with all this. And besides, they cost a lot of money. They raise your budget up to a point where it gets silly. I'm now doing a picture that's a circus. It's got everybody in it: Robert DeNiro, Jack Nicholson, Robert Mitchum, Tony Curtis, Jeanne Moreau, Donald Pleasance. Like in a circus—first the lions come on, then the tightrope walkers. I don't mind it, though. It's sort of fun....

Sometimes the face of a real person is far more eloquent than any actor can achieve. There's something about almost all actors that is too well-fed looking. If you have a scene of a working-class person or a person deprived by life or a person who is hard up, it's much better sometimes to get a face. You can't beat a cop in a cop role. They play cops very well, so you go to the police station to get a cop. Fellini says, "I don't give a damn how they talk or whether they talk at all. I'll dub that in later. Give me the face." The face is a piece of statuary, a piece of

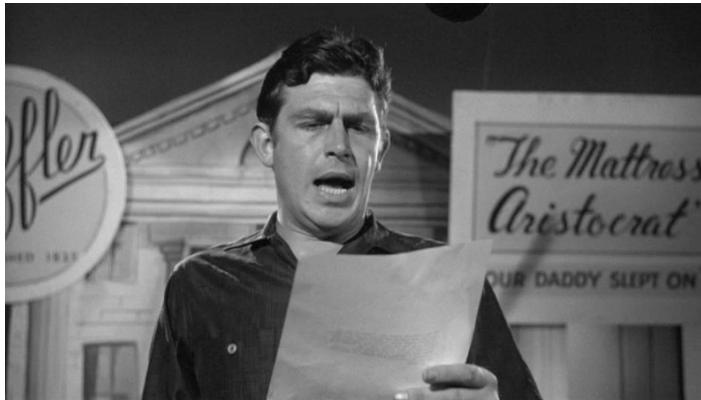
revelation....

Andy Griffith wasn't exactly an unknown before A Face in the Crowd, though he wasn't known as an actor. But his performance is probably the best of his career.

He was not an actor, rather a monologist. He was very eager to be good and had none of the defenses that stars usually have. He didn't want to look a certain way or make a certain impression. There are scenes in that movie that would be difficult for anybody. It's a very hard part. I think the film walks a very tight line, and I'm not sure it bridges satire and tragedy altogether successfully. We were satirizing the whole scene of public communication. The film was made in 1956, and I think we anticipated a lot of what happened in Nixon's time and what's happening today. We tried to satirize it on the one hand and get some sort of human portrait of a man on the other. I would say that considering who Andy was, he gave an excellent performance. I think it would be hard to match.

Was there any relationship between the McCarthy hearings and this film?

No. We started out from a short story by Budd Schulberg about the power and threat of television. We were saying, "Beware of it," but also that it could be a force for good. I believe that television is a terrific force for good. When you see people in close-up behaving off-guard, I think you understand them. That was the case in the McCarthy hearings when McCarthy at one point whispered to Roy Cohn. I don't think anyone who saw it will ever forget that whisper....



Do you leave the composition of a close-up to your cameraman?

Hell, no. I don't leave anything to anybody. I don't mean to be mean about it, but I think everything tells a story. Hitchcock's the best example. The way he does close-ups is fantastic. In *The Last Tycoon*, I've tried to make De Niro look like a very sensitive person. You've seen what he usually plays. I used a still camera and I found out that when I got up high, his cheeks sank in a little bit and he looked

more drawn, more ascetic. That's something good for me to know. So I try in certain scenes to go up a little bit higher.

...

The first artist I admired in my life was Sergei Eisenstein. The second man I admired was Alexander Dovzhenko and a picture called *Air City*, made in 1935. These men were idols, and you are affected by your idols, as I was by Renoir's films. So I became a film director out of admiration, out of wanting to be like that—hero worship. I think it's the most wonderful art in the world.

The problem with a personal film like The Visitors, of course, is getting around the distribution system.

The hope of directors like me is to start our own distribution outfit. I own *Baby Doll* and *A Face in the Crowd*, and I have someone who books these in colleges. The rights to *America, America* will revert to me and I'll do the same thing. I'm trying to create another source of distribution rather than the big

theaters. The theaters are never going to show *Wild River*, though I think that it's an unusual picture and that the last half of it is wonderful.

Why won't they show it?

Because they don't make any money from it. Minimum advertising in *The New York Times*, the *New York Post* and the *Village Voice* gets up to twenty-five thousand dollars. Nobody's going to risk twenty-five thousand dollars unless they think it's going to come back. The record shows them that they won't get it back.

You said A Face in the Crowd lost money. What sort of response did it get when it opened?

I think it received better than average. I think it's a hell of a good film myself, with all its faults. I think it says a lot, anticipates a lot. Nora Sayre said in *The New York Times* last winter that it anticipated a lot of the Watergate hearings. I wish she could have reviewed it at the time. But we didn't do too well with it. A lot of my films didn't. *America, America* started like a house afire in New York City and died everywhere else. Now it's played nine times a year in Paris. In Athens, it's constantly playing. In Germany it's played all the time. *Wild River* was an absolute financial disaster. I heard last year that when Twentieth Century Fox cleaned house they burned a lot of negatives, and among them the negative of that picture. Imagine how I feel....

Does your concern for structure mean giving close attention to editing?

I think editing is part of directing. That's why I don't like it when editors get the same credit that directors do. I think a director should do absolutely everything. I think the sets are his. The costumes are his. The editing is his. I'm a believer in the dominance of one person who has a vision....

What do you look for when you consider doing a film?

I don't move unless I have some empathy with the basic theme. In some way the channel of the film should also be my own life. I start with an instinct. With *East of Eden* I said, "I don't know why it is but the last ninety pages of Steinbeck's book turn me on." It's really the story of my father and me, and I didn't realize it for a long time. When Paul Osborn and I began to work on the screenplay, I realized that it's just the way I was. I was always the bad boy, but I thought I was the good boy. In some subtle or not-so-subtle way, every film is autobiographical. A thing in my life is expressed by the essence of the film. Then I know it experientially, not just mentally. I've got to feel that it's in some way about me, somehow about my struggles, some way about my pain, my hopes.



Thomas Belzer: A Face in the Crowd (Senses of Cinema):

Between Mayberry, Matlock and snack crackers, Andy Griffith is an American icon of heart-warming goodness, so it was difficult for some to accept him as the disturbing Lonesome Rhodes in Elia Kazan's *A Face In the Crowd*. This is one reason the film wasn't a success in 1957. But, also, people don't like being told they are gullible fools being manipulated by a shadowy elite. True to the American paradigm (the myth of the powerful individual), most assessments of the film focus on the duplicitous megalomaniacal Rhodes as the source of the evil media manipulation, an evil that is then exorcised by the removal of the perpetrator. He is often compared, and rightly so, to Arthur Godfrey, the media giant who ruled the American airwaves at the time and was fond of repeating, "I made you all, and I can break you at anytime." In mainstream U. S. media culture it is always the lone, power-mad individual who is to blame for societal ills, and it is only the lone hero who is able to save the day. This formula allows the masses to focus on an interesting villain and experience a vicarious victory through the hero, while leaving them with a calming feeling of happy impotence. However, scriptwriter Budd Schulberg and Kazan were both given to biting the hands that fed them, and were targeting more insidious villains whom they both knew intimately, villains who are still with us, now more than ever.

Fully cultured and educated radio reporter Marcia Jeffries and writer Mel Miller (played brilliantly by Patricia Neal and Walter Matthau) promote Rhodes for the sake of their own careers with full knowledge of who and what he is. Martha catches up with her star-to-be on the road out of town on the morning after his jail cell appearance and asks him, quoting from the song he had improvised on the radio program: "How does it feel to be a free man in the morning?" Larry 'Lonesome' Rhodes just looks to his left, disgusted, and crudely spits. She knows exactly what sort of varmint she's dragged out from under a rock – a Southern grifter utterly without principles or restraint. He reminds me of the Bible salesman who steals a college girl's wooden leg in Flannery O'Connor's "Good Country People". The Salesman leaves the girl helpless in a hayloft and says, "Hulga, you ain't so smart. I been believing in nothing ever since I was born". Marcia knows that Rhodes is this type of man, but she doesn't care because he can be used to further her interests, an attitude all of his handlers and backers share.

Andy Griffith brilliantly plays the most complex character of his entire career. Rhodes knows he's being used but doesn't care as long as he can graze in the food chain, and he makes it clear that he plans on doing some 'using' himself. His Will Rogers-like facade of hayseed-wisdom is for the public only, and he sells his lie to them by being refreshingly honest and acting seemingly utterly without premeditation. His creator, Marcia, unbelievably, allows herself to fall for him.

I grew up in Memphis, Tennessee and we Southerners immediately identify Rhodes as a familiar personality using a well-worn technique. More than Arthur Godfrey, he is reminiscent of Sputnik Monroe, Dewey Phillips and, of course, Elvis Presley, feigning ignorance while playing every possible angle. These personalities stroked their poor white and black audiences, treating them better than they'd ever been treated while at the same time deceiving them cheerfully and taking their money. These Memphis personalities exploited (and were exploited by) a complex cultural dialectic at play which Griffith, Schulberg and Kazan all understood perfectly and, might I add, personally.

Midget wrestler, Sputnik Monroe, created the first integrated event ever in the South by paying off the doorman to flood the arena with his black fans. As one elderly black woman said to Sputnik some years later: “I used to live in Memphis when they made us sit upstairs in those buzzard seats. You're the one who got them to change that”. Like the fictional Rhodes, genuine altruism mixed with cynical disdain and self-love motivated Monroe's violation of the colour barrier and the same could be said of Dewey Phillips and Elvis Presley. Phillips made fun of his sponsors and ingeniously promoted them and himself at the same time: “Go on down to People's furniture, get whatcha want and just pay 'em a dime and then pay for it while you're wearing it out or when they catch up with you”. He talked on top of songs and literally demolished the very records he was making famous. Executives at WHBQ were dismayed even as they raked in the money. Co-worker Milton Ponds reports that they said, “Look at this guy, he's a goddamn lush, he's a pillhead, he doesn't know what the fuck he's doing. Yet people love him and he's breaking records. How can Dewey do this and we can't.” When he moved to television, he spent half the show “dragging the cameras out in front of the audience” and “arguing on the air about when they were going to take a commercial break”. It is Phillips' antics that are the real source of the Memphis program in the film. Listening to the chatter on Elvis' “Sun Sessions” makes it clear that Presley's attitude was one of slumming mockery and genuine admiration at the same time. When he went to Hollywood, it is well-known that Presley despised the movies in which he was cast, their target audience and himself for doing them, all the while basking in the glory and wealth they brought him.

In the 1950s, when rock and race music were breaking into the mainstream, the cultural elites initially tried to shut them down. Contrary to official American mythology, Michael Bertrand argues in *Race, Rock and Elvis* that racial integration took place organically among poor whites and blacks and was opposed by the educated Ivy League establishment every step of the way. Bertrand quotes the *Virginia Quarterly Review* as typical of establishment views at that time, a history we'd like to forget: “The mass of Southern Negroes and the majority of the whites are incapable of directing their own affairs... [and] are biologically inferior” (6). In *A Face In the Crowd* this establishment is represented by Col. Hollister, a man whose quiet power sways presidents, creates senators and extends into the corporate and military realms. He is the real target of this moral fable, not Lonesome Rhodes. In an unusually candid moment, Col. Hollister reveals to Rhodes that his agenda is much more insidious than selling a useless pep pill: “In every strong and healthy society from the Egyptians on, the masses had to be guided with a strong hand by a responsible elite.” Lonesome Rhodes doesn't mind being the hammer for this hand as long as he gets paid and laid on a regular basis, and our current herd of entertainers and programmers feel exactly the same way. Only, like Rhodes, they sometimes begin to believe that they really *are* the cultural elite, and that is when they have to be wiped off the media map. (This elite is still firmly in place. All of our Presidential candidates this year are 'Yalies'.) The opening credits of *A Face in the Crowd* are a whistled version of the blues classic “Sittin' on Top of the World,” whose lyrics capture the bitter ironies of such a position. The song is brought back in mournful arrangements during several of the film's key moments. It is the perfect choice for underscoring the precarious process of first “sittin' on top of the world” and then finding yourself suddenly ground under by it, a change in status Kazan was certainly familiar with. What the

cultural establishment can't tame and control, it ignores or destroys. Elvis was tamed and Dewey Phillips and Sputnik Monroe were ignored. The drama of *A Face In the Crowd* is not about the rise of a demagogue but about the gradual taming of a wild man, and the ultimate failure of that attempt.

Mel consoles Marcia regarding the monster that Rhodes had become: “You were taken in just like we were all taken in;” but he is lying. Earlier in the press room, he is throwing darts at a poster of Lonesome Rhodes under which lies the title of Eric Fromm's book, *Escape from Freedom*, something he cynically knows most Americans are desperately trying to do. He's too smart to be taken in, and so is Marcia, except for her misguided libido. They've all done this before, and they'll do it again. It is Larry Rhodes who is 'taken in' and left bawling like a wounded steer. He thought he could play the media game but discovered that he was ultimately not smart or tough enough. His personality cracks under the strain of his persona. Patricia Neal reports that the same thing happened to Andy Griffith. On a History Channel documentary she states that “Andy brought the megalomaniacal character of Lonesome Rhodes into his home life,” and it nearly cost him his marriage. Perhaps after his hayseed stand up act and his Broadway hit *No Time for Sergeants*, the Lonesome Rhodes character struck a little too close to home.

Mark Deming's comments for *All Movie Guide* are typical of most reviews and summaries of the film: “And while Walter Matthau has the thankless task of delivering the film's moral in his final speech, you can't say that he didn't know how to make the most of it, as he sums up Lonesome's crimes with lip-smacking cynicism”. I hope it is clear how wrong this assessment is. This is no 'message movie' whose message is obvious and dated. Matthau's speech is actually a subtle self-indictment (an indictment that Kazan and Schulberg are levying against themselves as well) that speaks volumes about the media's complicit involvement with corrupt governments owned by faceless corporations. *A Face In the Crowd* is, in fact, as fresh and relevant as tomorrow's headlines.



UB HUMANITIES INSTITUTE ANNUAL CONFERENCE: “The Other Side of Reason: The History of Madness Today,” UB Center for the Arts, Oct. 31-Nov. 1, 2008:

Friday, October 31

9:30 a.m. Registration, Center for the Arts, North Campus

9:50 a.m. Welcome: **Tim Dean**, Department of English, Director, Humanities Institute, UB; **Bruce McCombe**, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences

10:00-11:30 a.m.: **Elizabeth Lunbeck**, Departments of History and Psychiatry, Vanderbilt University: *Narcissism Normalized: Heinz Kohut's Psychoanalytic Revolution*

Moderator: **Susan Cahn**, Department of History, UB

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.: **Guy Le Gaufey**, Psychoanalyst,

École Lacanienne de Psychoanalysis, Paris: *Knitting Foucault, Purling Foucault*

Moderator: **Steven Miller**, Department of English, UB
2:30-4:00 p.m.: **Benjamin Reiss**, Department of English ,
Emory University: *Creative Writing and Psychiatric Surveillance: Virginia Tech and the Politics of Risk Management*

Moderator: **Carrie Tirado Bramen**, Department of English; Executive Director, Humanities Institute, UB
4:15-5:45 p.m.: **Bruce Jackson**, Department of English ,
University at Buffalo: *Out of Time and Doing Time: When Madness Became Criminal*

Moderator: **Lisa Szeffel**, Department of History, Pacific University

Saturday, November 1

9:30 a.m. Registration, Center for the Arts, North Campus
10:00 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.: **Marjorie Garber**, Departments of English & American Literature; Visual & Environmental Studies, Harvard University: *Mad Lib*

Moderator: **Donald E. Pease**, Humanities Institute
Distinguished Scholar in Residence

11:45 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.: **Elizabeth Povinelli**, Department of Anthropology, Columbia University: *The Exclusions of Reason: Ab-Original Truth, Rhetoric, Genealogy*

Moderator: **Ana Mariella Bacigalupo**, Department of Anthropology, UB

2:30-4:00 p.m.: Screening: *Titicut Follies* (1967)
Frederick Wiseman's controversial documentary about the treatment of criminally insane inmates at the Massachusetts Correctional Institution. Moderators: **Diane Christian** and **Bruce Jackson**, Department of English, UB



3 x3 @ AKAG

Bruce Jackson and Diane Christian will host a series of nine Thursday evening film screenings at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery this spring. They will present three films by three masters of film form: Jean Renoir (1894–1979), Federico Fellini (1920—1993), and Yasujiro Ozu (1903—1963).

Jean Renoir

February 5 *The Grand Illusion* 1937
February 12 *La Bête Humaine* 1938
February 19 *Rules of the Game* 1939

Federico Fellini

March 5 *I Vitelloni* 1953
March 19 8 ½ 1963
March 26 *Juliet of the Spirits* 1965

Yasujiro Ozu

April 9 *Late Spring* 1949
April 16 *Tokyo Story* 1953
April 23 *Floating Weeds* 1959

Coming up in the Buffalo Film Seminars:

Nov 4 Krzysztof Kieslowski BLIND CHANCE (PRZYPADK) 1981

Nov 11 Wim Wenders PARIS, TEXAS 1984

Nov 18 Wong Kar-Wai IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE (FA YEUNG NIN WA) 2000

Nov 25 Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck THE LIVES OF OTHERS (DAS LEBEN DER ANDEREN) 2006

Dec 2 Stanley Kubrick 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY 1968

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for the series schedule, annotations, links and updates: <http://buffalofilmseminars.com>
to subscribe to the weekly email informational notes, send an email to addto_list@buffalofilmseminars.com
for cast and crew info on any film: <http://imdb.com/>

The Buffalo Film Seminars are presented by the Market Arcade Film & Arts Center
and State University of New York at Buffalo
with support from the Robert and Patricia Colby Foundation and the Buffalo News