

The Crime Films of Anthony Mann

By Max Alvarez

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Anthony Mann (1906–1967) is renowned for his outstanding 1950s westerns starring James Stewart (*Winchester '73*, *The Naked Spur*, *The Man from Laramie*). But there is more to Mann's cinematic universe than those tough Wild West action dramas featuring conflicted and secretive heroes. This brilliant Hollywood craftsman also directed fourteen electrifying crime thrillers between 1942 and 1951, among them such towering achievements in film noir as *T-Men*, *Raw Deal*, and *Side Street*. Mann was as much at home filming dark urban alleys in black-and-white as he was the prairies and mountains in Technicolor, and his protagonists were no less conflicted and secretive than his 1950s cowboys.

In these Mann crime thrillers we find powerful stories of sexual obsession (*The Great Flamarion*), the transforming images of women in wartime and postwar America (*Strangers in the Night*, *Strange Impersonation*), exploitation of Mexican immigrants (*Border Incident*), studies of the criminal mind (*He Walked by Night*), and Civil War bigotry (*The Tall Target*). Mann's forceful camera captured such memorable and diverse stars as Erich von Stroheim, Farley Granger, Dennis O'Keefe, Claire Trevor, Richard Basehart, Ricardo Montalbán, Ruby Dee, and Raymond Burr.

The Crime Films of Anthony Mann features analysis of rare documents, screenplays, story treatments, and studio memoranda and reveals detailed behind-the-scenes information on preproduction and production on the Mann thrillers. Author Max Alvarez uses rare and newly available sources to explore the creation of these noir masterworks. Along the way, the book exposes secrets and solves mysteries surrounding the mercurial director and his remarkable career, which also included Broadway and early live television.

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Editorial Review

Review

“This study is more than welcome, given the emphasis always placed on the director’s Westerns, and shows just how inspired and scrupulous a director Mann often was prior to making *Winchester ’73*, *The Man from Laramie* and *Man of the West*. The author provides essential contextual and background material on the often independent small studios that produced the films in question: the careful and systematic use of archival material enables him to determine with a considerable degree of accuracy and conviction the nature of the contributions to each film by the director and his collaborators, in particular director of photography John Alton. The articulation of the textual and the extra-textual makes *The Crime Films of Anthony Mann* a most valuable work for teachers and students alike, as well as for the informed general reader.”

?Reynold Humphries, former professor of film studies at the University of Lille, France

“Among devoted cinephiles, Anthony Mann’s Westerns have been enshrined near the top achievements in that beloved genre, especially the handful he made with James Stewart, but little has been written about the excellent series of crime pictures he directed before those. That oversight has now been corrected with this meticulously researched and lovingly detailed new book by Max Alvarez, a triumph of film scholarship, most readable, reliable in its opinions, and touching in its devotion to the subject at hand.”

?Peter Bogdanovich

From the Inside Flap
A survey and rediscovery of the many noir films directed by a master of the western

About the Author
Max Alvarez is a film historian and public speaker on world cinema. He has developed presentation partnerships with such organizations as the Smithsonian Institution and is the former film programmer for National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C. His essay on Thornton Wilder’s *Shadow of a Doubt* screenplay appears in the book *Thornton Wilder: New Perspectives* from Northwestern University Press. He has also written for *Film History: An International Journal* and *Chicago Tribune*. The National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. and Pacific Film Archive in Berkeley have both showcased Alvarez’s groundbreaking scholarship on Anthony Mann as part of their public programs focusing on the director’s work. Find him at www.maxjalvarez.com.

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