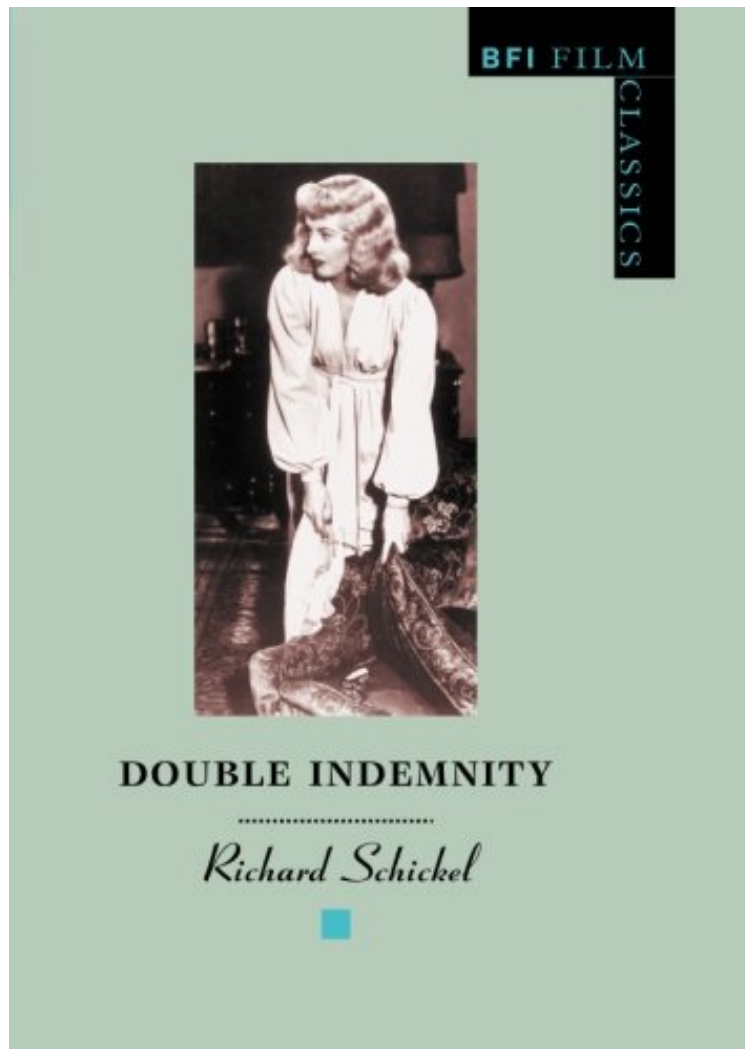


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Double Indemnity (BFI Film Classics)

Richard Schickel

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#1039558 in Books Richard Schickel 1992-10-27 2008-01-22Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.51 x .23 x 5.24l, .26 #File Name: 085170298872 pagesDouble Indemnity | File size: 38.Mb

Richard Schickel : Double Indemnity (BFI Film Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Double Indemnity (BFI Film Classics):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Schickel's PickBy CustomerSchickel is particular about what he thinks is best and like most great film critics he lists Double Indemnity as the very epitome of the forties film noir classics. Another gem in the expert BFI literary series that critiques the greatest movies of all time.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy MateoDLRPristine condition. Just as described.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Very Entertaining ReadBy Dash ManchetteDouble Indemnity holds an absolutely unique place in my personal history. I have encountered movies that have bucked the trend and been better than their books: THE BOURNE IDENTITY, RABBIT PROOF FENCE, THE PLAYER, DRUGSTORE COWBOY. But those books

were not very good to begin with. What is remarkable is that the novel DOUBLE INDEMNITY is really quite good, and the movie is still better. That, my friends, is an accomplishment. Author Richard Schickel helps us understand why in this excellent entry in the BFI series. A good deal of time (relatively speaking; this book is small even by BFI standards) is spent examining the writing of the movie against the backdrop of the books author, James Cain, the screenwriter, Raymond Chandler (a huge figure in American crime noir himself), their relationships to Hollywood, and Chandlers icy relationship with co-screenwriter and director Billy Wilder. Great art sometimes comes from the creative destruction that occurs when such discordant personalities come together, to which the movie Double Indemnity. The movie is such a pleasure to watch now that it is striking to realize what it meant at the time. It came out before the term crime noir was even coined, making it that much harder to sell, both to the audience and, before that, to the studios. Together with the more conservative social climate and the censorship board reluctant to show crime unpunished by the law (the criminals punishing each other did not count), and it is a wonder that it made it to the screen. On top of that, the casting. Fred MacMurray fits into the role of Walter Neff, the insurance man more dupe than he realizes, so seamlessly, it seems the role was written just for him. But he was a controversial choice, having built a reputation as a nice guy in comedy roles. Other actors had turned it down, one because he insisted, consistent with the tune of the times, that Walter Neff reveal himself as a cop at the end, never having been on the wrong side of the moral divide. That was George Raft. Remember him? No, me neither. Nice instinct you had there, George. And Edward G. Robinson? Reluctant to take the supporting role after being the star for years, he made the right choice to follow a career path of excellent co-starring roles rather than decline as the lead. His character was written in to the movie to provide a moral center lacking in the book, and Robinson hit it out of the park. All discussed, shortly but sweetly, in this nice little book. If you like the movie, by all means, read this, and enjoy it a wee bit more.

A new kind of film emerged from Hollywood in the early 1940s, thrillers that derived their plots from the hard-boiled school of crime fiction but with a style all their own. Appearing in 1944, "Double Indemnity" was a key film in the definition of the genre that came to be known as film noir. Its script creates two unforgettable criminal characters: the cynically manipulative Phyllis Dietrichson (Barbara Stanwyck) and the likeable but amoral Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray). Billy Wilder's brilliant direction enmeshes them in chiaroscuro patterns, the bright California sun throwing shadows of venetian blinds across dusty rooms, shafts of harsh lamplight cutting through the night. Richard Schickel traces in fascinating detail the genesis of the film: its literary origins in the crime fiction of the 1930s, the difficult relations between Wilder and his scriptwriter Raymond Chandler, the casting of a reluctant Fred MacMurray, the late decision to cut from the film the expensively shot final sequence of Neff's execution. This elegantly written account, copiously illustrated, confirms a new the status of "Double Indemnity" as an undisputed classic.

.com Richard Schickel is a great lover of Billy Wilder's Double Indemnity, one of the earliest and best examples of film noir. In this lively book, Schickel provides an engrossing account of how the movie's screenplay was written. He compares the film to James M. Cain's novel and talks about how screenwriters Wilder and Raymond Chandler tried to improve upon it. He quotes generously from the film's dialogue and waxes admiringly upon its sleekness and style. Schickel's deep affection is infectious. His book encourages you to hear the movie through his enthusiastic ears and see it through his delighted eyes. From the Back Cover A new kind of film emerged from Hollywood in the early 1940s, thrillers that derived their plots from the hard-boiled school of crime fiction but with a style all their own. Appearing in 1944, "Double Indemnity" was a key film in the definition of the genre that came to be known as film noir. Its script creates two unforgettable criminal characters: the cynically manipulative Phyllis Dietrichson (Barbara Stanwyck) and the likeable but amoral Walter Neff (Fred MacMurray). Billy Wilder's brilliant direction enmeshes them in chiaroscuro patterns, the bright California sun throwing shadows of venetian blinds across dusty rooms, shafts of harsh lamplight cutting through the night. Richard Schickel traces in fascinating detail the genesis of the film: its literary origins in the crime fiction of the 1930s, the difficult relations between Wilder and his scriptwriter Raymond Chandler, the casting of a reluctant Fred MacMurray, the late decision to cut from the film the expensively shot final sequence of Neff's execution. This elegantly written account, copiously illustrated, confirms a new the status of "Double Indemnity" as an undisputed classic. About the Author Richard Schickel is film critic of Time. His most recent book is Brando: A Life in Our Times.