

**Thursday February 29th 2024**

# In A Lonely Place

USA 1950 90mins Cert PG

Director Nicholas Ray's classic 1950 *noir* thriller remains essential viewing, with a scalding performance by Humphrey Bogart that's possibly the highlight of his illustrious career.

In the film, he relishes one of his most complex, intricate and satisfying roles as quick-tempered, potentially violent Hollywood screenwriter Dixon Steele, who tries to prove his innocence of the murder of hat-check girl Mildred Atkinson - whom he'd interviewed earlier the same night to help him write a script adapting a trashy bestseller. Number one suspect in the case, he quickly gets involved in a new romance with his beautiful neighbour, starlet Laurel Gray (Gloria Grahame) who, to help him out of the jam, gives him a false alibi - however, she soon begins to have doubts that he may be the killer after all.

The well-matched stars are on top, edgy form, with Grahame showing herself easily the match and equal of the great Bogart, and there is commendably hard work in support from the usual fine character-actor cast of the era, Frank Lovejoy (as the detective sergeant), Carl Benton Reid, Art Smith, Jeff Donnell, Robert Warwick, Martha Stewart, Steven Geray and Morris Ankrum among them.

Ray cranks up the tension, suspense and emotional heat, while casting his cynical eye over the underbelly of 'Tinseltown' and driving the film dynamically along to its surprise finish. Andrew Solt's expert screenplay is freely based on Dorothy B Hughes' novel, providing a new spin on Hitchcock's *Suspicion* (1941), while Burnett Guffey's atmospheric black and white cinematography gives just the right *noir* look to the movie.

In 1953, Gloria Grahame won the Best Supporting Actress Oscar for *The Bad and the Beautiful* (Vincente Minelli, 1952) and during the 1950s, she played half a dozen shady ladies in famous *film-noir* classics, including especially *The Big Heat* (Fritz Lang, 1953). She died of cancer in October 1981 at the age of only 57 - her life story being told in the award-winning *Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool* (Paul McGuigan, 2017).

Producer Robert Lord was concerned about having Ray and Grahame - then husband and wife in a failing marriage - working together. He managed to get Grahame to sign a bizarre contract agreeing that 'my husband shall be entitled to direct, control, advise, instruct and even command my actions during the hours from 9.00am to 6.00pm, every day except Sunday ... I acknowledge that in every conceivable situation, his will and judgment shall be considered superior to mine and shall prevail' (she also agreed not to 'nag, cajole, tease or in any other feminine fashion seek to distract or influence him')! Bogart actually wanted his wife Lauren Bacall to appear with him in the film but Warner Bros wouldn't release her from her contract, so Ray was free to cast his own wife in the part.

Shared with *The Men*, (dir. Fred Zinneman) in 1950, the film won Photoplay's Best Picture award of the month and Best Performance for Humphrey Bogart. In 2007, the film won a place in the National Film Registry as a work of significance awarded by the USA Film Preservation Board.

Acknowledgments: Derek Winnert, [derekwinnert.co](http://derekwinnert.co)

## Leading Players

Humphrey Bogart	Dixon Steele
Gloria Grahame	Laurel Gray
Frank Lovejoy	Sgt. Brub Nicolai
Robert Warwick	Charlie Waterman
Martha Stewart	Mildred Atkinson

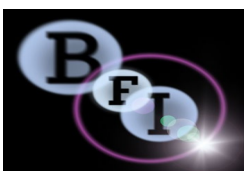
## Production Credits

Director	Nicolas Ray
Producers	Robert Lord, Henry S Kesler, Humphrey Bogart
Screenplay	Andrew Solt, Edmund H North
Cinematography	Burnett Guffey DP
Original Music	George Antheil

## Coming Soon

March 28th

**TRANSIT** (USA, 2018, 105mins, Cert PG) Auteur Christian Petzold's adaptation of Anna Seghers' novel is a brilliantly realised haunting, allegorical thriller. In its timeless narrative, the film explores questions of loss of homeland, identity and the desperate trauma of displaced refugees. Existentially blurring the past with modern times, the film shows how little has changed in the intervening years between its WW2 setting and the present day.



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