

## Document Citation

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**WILLIAM K. EVERSON PRESENTS  
THE "FILM NOIR": TWO BY FRITZ LANG  
HOUSE BY THE RIVER 7:30**

"Although only a quarter of a century old, THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER is, to all intents and purposes, a lost film. For reasons never made clear, the original 35mm negative deteriorated, and apparently no good 35mm prints remain in good enough condition for a new dupe negative to be struck. In any case, the film is physically so black and dark that any copy would lose so much detail and pictorial nuance as to be quite inadequate. The 16mm print we have tonight is, black or not, exceptionally good and may well be the best print extant. Although his films of the '30s and early '40s had been well spaced, Lang's career was even less active in the late forties, with only three films between Autumn of 1944 and THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER, released in the spring of 1950. However, it marked the beginning of his most prolific Hollywood period—the first of ten films over a six-year stretch. Most of them tended to be rather second-rate Lang; in later years, he repudiated the strong visual style of his earlier films, and claimed that the plot should be everything, and the director's signature of little importance. However, this may well have been because his eyesight was then beginning to fail and, of necessity, he was forced into stories where dialogue and acting, rather than pictorial virtuosity, carried most of the film. Too, and equally important, in the '50s theme rather than style was considered more important, and Lang, like any professional filmmaker looking for new assignments, would at least pay lip service to being a part of the current filmic fashion. With the exception of the much under-rated MOONFLEET, THE HOUSE BY THE RIVER is about the last stand of the old Lang: stark, nightmarish, abrasively anti-social in its parade of bickering, petty smalltown types, and like most of his films, existing in its own little totally studio-created world, without any hint of genuine fresh air or real exteriors. It must represent an extreme in the physically black entries in the "film-noir" genre. Lang himself seems to have liked the film, despite the censorship problems it posed (outlined in his interview book with Peter Bogdanovich)." — Wm. K.

**Everson**

Directed by Fritz Lang. Produced by Howard Welsch. Screenplay by Mel Dinelli from the novel by A. P. Herbert. Music by Georges Antheil. With Louis Hayward, Lee Bowman, Jane Wyatt. (Fidelity Pictures-Republic, 1950, 82 mins)