

## Document Citation

Title	<b>The informer</b>
Author(s)	
Source	<i>San Francisco Sentinel</i>
Date	
Type	program
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	The informer, Ford, John, 1935

# P.S.C. FILM COMMITTEE

PRESENTS

## THE INFORMER

The Informer ( 1935 ) Directed by John Ford  
January 26, 1968

Tonight's film, The Informer, is the second of three American productions on our inter program. The first was Juston's Treasure of the Sierra Madre and the other will be Little Caesar, starring Edward G. Robinson, to be shown February 29. Of course, we don't intend to make any moral inferences, but these three films under the general heading of "Bad Guys" present us with an interesting cross-section of American motion-picture achievement.

In Treasure of the Sierra Madre, we have at least a good effort by John Juston, who, although his career has been largely uninspiring, is an important director in contemporary motion pictures. And, in Little Caesar, we can note one of the uniquely American contributions to cinema history, the gangster film. This influence can be traced from Little Caesar to the whole Bogart cycle (High Sierra, etc.) and then to Godard's Breathless and finally to Sonnie and Clyde. Of the three films, The Informer, is perhaps the most significant.

The Informer is adapted from the novel by Liam O'Flaherty. The novel was published in 1925 and the reviews were mixed, but John Ford (born Sean O'Flaherty in Portland, Maine) became interested in the story set against the background of the Irish Revolution of 1922. However, it was not until 1935, that he was able to convince his studio to purchase rights to the novel and this only after his previous film Lost Patrol was a tremendous success. As it turned out, R K O was well rewarded for its \$243,000 investment: The Informer won not only the New York film critics' award for best picture and best direction, but also, despite the fact that John Ford was not an Academy member, it captured four Academy Awards, including best picture, best direction and best script. As George Bluestone comments in his book Novels into Film:

. . . The Informer defied most of Hollywood's conventions. It had no happy ending. The Hero, though physically powerful, did not repel whole armies of Indians or Arabs with a single carbine. The hero's woman was unmistakably a prostitute. The hero's romantic dreams were unfulfilled. The setting and the circumstances of the drama were...more controversial than Ford had imagined. Why, then, did it make such a lasting impression on critics and viewers alike?

The element that made this film stand out among some other notable Hollywood productions in 1935 (Charles Laughton's Mutiny on the Bounty, Thirty-nine Steps, David Copperfield and others) and that allows the film to remain significant even today is John Ford's direction. For the first time a director successfully portrayed a psychological drama by means of the cinema's unique ability to combine sights and sounds.

Ford, as Bluestone examines in his book, uses every means at his disposal as a director to create on the screen the image of a modern-day Judas that O'Flaherty had portrayed in the novel. The entire film is composed of a series of events that take place inside of 12 hours one night in Dublin. The entire plot is based on the events leading up to and the betrayal of an Irish revolutionary and the subsequent torment of the informer's soul.

Ford is so obvious in his attempts to portray this torment on the screen by means of lighting, fog, darkness, sounds, songs and music that one reviewer commented that

[he] must needs drive every nail down three inches below the surface: hence whole organic stretches are made flabby or (as is the case with the last episode in church, the intercession of Katy) actually distressing. Otis Ferguson, The New Republic, May 29, 1935.



The Informer ( continued)

This may also be the reaction of the contemporary viewer, who, accustomed to the films of Antonioni, Bresson and others, may think Ford's early efforts are trite. Nevertheless, then as now, ". . . the greatest importance of the film consists in its experimentation with the means of Rendering subjective moods and states of mind on the screen." The Nation, may 22, 1935.

Gregory Vranizan

Note on Next Week's film:

M - Directed by Fritz Lang, starring Peter Lorre.

Peter Lorre portrays a child-murderer who causes the police, in their search for him, to disrupt the city's underworld. And in the underworld as well as the regular society, order must prevail. With both elements teamed against him Lorre hasn't as change. Pauline Kael notes that Lang's direction exhibits " something rare - - - a speck of genius."

The shorts: a Buster Keaton comedy.

Our weekly Wednesday noon films this next week will include Corral and Cross Country Runner. There will probably be another film also. These are F.R.E and are shown at 12 and again at 1 in 296/298 College Center.

Other film items which might be of interest to the avid film goer are:

First of all is the fact that we have four films scheduled which are being advertised by a local theatre. The four are Wild Strawberries--Feb. 16; Rashomon--April 5; Ivan The Terrible (part II)--April 26; Rules of the Game May 17. We are glad to see a local theatre taking the initiative on bringing back such ~~of~~ a collection of these older films and hope that you will support them.

We have another Children's Film Program scheduled for Feb. 3. It will be shown here in 75 Old Main at 10, 12:30 and again at 3. The cost is only 25¢ and it is open to the public so we would appreciate the word being spread as far as possible. The only stipulation is that each child or group of children is accompanied by someone at least in their teens so that we don't become a baby-sitting service.

The Film Committee is in serious need of members if we are going to continue with the programs which we have now on a regular basis and still have time to search out special programs as they become available. If you are a student who will be around next year and would be interested in helping to further film at Portland State stop by our office in 446 College Center or give us a phone call. Our number is 226-7271 Ext. 372. This also goes for any of you who might have a suggestion on how we might be able to increase attendance among students and faculty. We'd like to hear your ideas. Also would like it if everyone would pass the word about the film program on to a friend.

Tonight's Cabaret entertainment includes Don Winslow of the Navy and an experimental film by Bruce Baillie, Valentin des las Sierras. Also on the program will be William Stafford reading his poetry. The time is about 9:45 and the place is in the Basement of College Center.