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Knock on Any Door

Hollywood, Feb. 19.

Columbia release of Robert Lord (Santana) production. Stars Humphrey Bogart; features John Derek, George Macready, Allene Roberts, Susan Perry, Mickey Knox, Barry Kelley. Directed by Nicholas Ray. Screenplay, Daniel Taradash, John Monks, Jr.; from novel by Willard Motley; camera, Barnett Guffey; score, George Antheil; editor, Viola Lawrence. Previewed Feb. 17, '49. Running time, 98 MINS.

Andrew Morton.....	Humphrey Bogart
Nick Romano.....	John Derek
Dist. Attorney Kerman..	George Macready
Emma.....	Allene Roberts
Adle.....	Susan Perry
Vito.....	Mickey Knox
Judge Drake.....	Barry Kelley
Nelly.....	Cara Williams
Kid Fingers.....	Jimmy Conlin
Jimmy.....	Sumner Williams
Squint.....	Sid Melton
Juan.....	Pepe Hern
Butch.....	Dewey Martin
Sunshine.....	Robert A. Davis
Junior.....	Houseley Stevenson
Bartender.....	Vince Barnett
Officer Hawkins.....	Thomas Sully
Aunt Lena.....	Florence Auer
Parcell.....	Pierre Watkin
Corey.....	Gordon Nelson
Ma Romano.....	Argentina Brunetti
Julian Romano.....	Dick Sinatra
Ang Romano.....	Carol Coombs
Maria Romano.....	Joan Baxter

An eloquent document on juvenile delinquency, its cause and effect, has been fashioned from "Knock On Any Door." More important, filmwise, is that it's a hard-hitting, tight melodrama of the kind that rates solid boxoffice coin. Title doesn't mean much but it is a picture that can be exploited and has the added advantage of the Humphrey Bogart name to spark the selling.

"Knock" is an independent Santana (Bogart's) production for Columbia release. It is an articulate picture that expresses a thoughtful premise without neglecting any of the factors that make for commercial melodrama. Its best playdates will be city situations where skidrows and wild youth are more of a problem than in the smalltown and country territories, but it has the punch to give a good account of itself in most any booking.

Picture introduces a young man who, to all purposes, is the principal character upon whose shoulders the story burden falls. He is John Derek—a new bobbysoxer dream and a personality who will click with the femmes, motherly or otherwise.

He is the bad boy of the picture. Story opens when the youth, arrested for the wanton killing of a cop, calls on lawyer Humphrey Bogart to defend him. Bogart, himself a slums product who rose above it, reluctantly takes the case after being convinced Derek, no matter how bad, is innocent. His courtroom defense centers mainly on detailed flashbacks of events that brought the youth to his present state. The device is effectively used, building sympathy for the boy and prodding the civic conscience for permitting the conditions.

Film is not a Bogart picture in the sense of his past efforts. But he is a skillful mime who wallops a line or tightens a situation with a lot of dramatic force. His courtroom sides are vigorously delivered and he gives importance to the overall punch which this one has.

Finale comes over with a smash in view of fact that the forceful script by Daniel Taradash and John Monks, Jr., has left the audience in

doubt as to whether or not Derek actually did the killing. The youth breaks under the last-minute needling of the prosecution, admits his guilt and paves the way for Bogart to make an impassioned plea for relief of the conditions that breed bad boys.

Nicholas Ray's direction stresses the realism of the script, taken from Willard Motley's novel of the same title and gives the film a hard, taut pace that compels complete attention. Only false note in his direction is the handling of the prosecutor in the confession scene, making him read his lines with a monotonous repetition that doesn't fit in with excellence of the other footage.

Dialog is gutty and natural, the characters true to type, and the playing exceptional. George Macready makes the most of the prosecutor; Allene Roberts, Derek's sweet bride who commits suicide, is very appealing. Mickey Knox, Sumner Williams, Sid Melton, Pepe Hern, Dewey Martin, Robert A. Davis are among the particularly good skidrow youths. Harry Kelley's portrayal of the judge is real and human. Among others of the long cast giving capable assists are Cara Williams, Jimmy Conlin, Houseley Stevenson, Vince Barnett, Argentina Brunetti.

Production by Robert Lord and his associate, Henry S. Kesler, has given the film a semi-documentary touch by careful casting and in the realism of locales used. These favorable factors are pointed up by Barnett Guffey's ace lensing and the moody music score by George Antheil. Expert editing by Viola Lawrence figures importantly in the pacing of the picture's 98 minutes. There are no drags. Brog.