

Document Citation

Title	Outside the law
Author(s)	Sime Silverman
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	1921 Jan 21
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Outside the law, Browning, Tod, 1920

OUTSIDE THE LAW.

For weeks the billboards around New York have been plastered with paper reading "If you play cards on Sunday, you are OUTSIDE THE LAW," and other reading matter, with the law portion heavily displayed. Much of the paper held the initials P. D., commonly understood as standing for Police Department. With the Blue Sunday talk, the posted paper caught attention, causing talk at first, and then simmering down to waiting for the development. That is at the Broadway theatre this week, a Jewel-Universal feature, with Priscilla Dean starred.

"Outside the Law" is a Ted Browning picture all the way, written, directed and produced by him. Mr. Browning did the job well, very well, in all particulars, turning out a Universal that can stand up on the billing, most unusual for the U.

It's a crook picture, strictly underworld, but tense often and holding all the time. It starts with action and ends with action. There is little if anything in it that the censors may point to, and it carries a strong moral, which, in brief, is, that virtue or honesty has its reward. That honesty is the best policy is plugged at throughout the picture, spoken through a Chinese sort of all-guardian to the crooks of Frisco, who induces a very nice young couple, from crookland and children of crooks, to go straight.

Miss Dean is one of the very nice young couples and Priscilla Dean in this picture is a film revelation. She has acquired pantomime for the screen, in expression, which is the most, and in the knowledge of how to use it. While the picture is exceptionally cast, also for a U film. Miss Dean goes to the fore and more there although Lee

Chaney gives her a strong race, also Wheeler Oakman, the other half of that nice young couple, though crooks. It isn't often when two thieving thieves, with one concerned in a murder frame-up that sent the father of his girl to prison, can gain the audience's sympathy as this couple do. That's heart interest with the interest very high. Chaney though makes his "Blackie" sneaky role so vicious he throws the house right into the young couple's laps.

There are fights that are fights, scenes of Frisco's Chinatown, a well set ballroom, and a little blonde kid that are all of continued interest or excitement. And that kid is a bear. The director who made him alternately laugh or cry to win over Molly (Miss Dean) did some directing there, and he had the child to do it with.

As a crook picture the exhibitor can go as far as he pleases with "Outside the Law." It's real underworld stuff, of an educational sort, bringing out the inner emotions of thieves, especially when hiding from the police, the somewhat now prevalent belief there is always a chance for a crook to reform, and crookedness itself. The double double-cross at the opening of the film is worth while alone, while the battle between the crooks at the ending is a stirring scene of picture, but with suspense maintained to its finish. *Sinc.*

Jan 21 '21