

## Document Citation

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HOLLYWOOD--You've heard of Hollywood ups and downs. Consider those of Joe Lewis, director of "Undercover Man", "The Return of October", and the unreleased "Gun Crazy", starring Peggy Cummins and John Dall.

Joe is a tight-knit, talkative man of 42 with beady brown eyes and a ruddy face. He started his career loading film into carrying cases in a dark room. He progressed to director of added scenes and from those to \$250-a-week director of whole pictures. Then, in 1938, there was a slump in picture-making. For a year and a half, Joe was out of work.

Broke, he took a job sweeping out a studio's film library. Thirty dollars a week. He broke up chunks of camphor and put them in the film cans to preserve the celluloid. "Smell that all day long," Joe laughs, "and you're ready for a straight-jacket." He lived on peanut-butter sandwiches, saved his money till he had \$300, and quit.

He was going to Hawaii. He boarded a streetcar. Half way to the docks he mused. "What am I running away for?" He got off the streetcar and took a taxicab to a Beverly Hills athletic club. He invited six friends there to have lunch with him and bought them all 50-cent cigars. This was all on impulse, and Joe still doesn't know exactly why.

After lunch he had a sweat bath in the steam room. An agent looked in and asked Joe for his plans. "I'm going to direct," Joe said. He admitted he didn't have a job. "If I can get you one, can I be your agent?" the agent asked. They agreed.

The agent got Joe a director's job--at \$250. Joe assumed that meant \$250 per week. Nope, \$250 per picture. He took it. Made several pictures and graduated to \$300 each. When he left the studio, he told the producer he wouldn't be back for less than 20 times that much, or \$6,000, per week. Eventually he went back--at that figure.

Joe's freelancing now and trying out a lot of ideas he has long wanted to try. In "Gun Crazy", he photographs a mile drive into the nearby town of Montrose from the back seat of a car, over the principals' shoulders. The camera watches Dall get out, enter a bank, run out with the money, and drive a mile out of town again. It's all done in one five-minute take.

I suggested to Joe that after his ups and downs he must feel on top at last. He said: "I don't think any ambitious guy's ever on top in Hollywood. The only place you can go from the top is down, on the other side. I want to keep on climbing."

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