

Document Citation

Title	All the king's men
Author(s)	Tom Allen Andrew Sarris Tom Allen Andrew Sarris
Source	<i>Village Voice</i>
Date	1987 May 19
Type	synopsis
Language	English English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	All the king's men, Rossen, Robert, 1949

Robert Rossen's ALL THE KING'S MEN (1949).

from a Rossen screenplay, based on the Robert Penn Warren novel, with Broderick Crawford, John Ireland, Joanne Dru, and Mercedes McCambridge, was highly regarded in its time for its gritty look and cynical attitude toward the political process. We can see it now in perspective as a rough-hewn, gutsy, independent work by a maverick filmmaker with more bravery in his convictions and innovations than formal accomplishment in his execution. Rossen promises a lot more than he delivers in his opening and closing Soviet-like montages of the redneck masses of rural America. Willie Stark's leap from cabin porch to the monolithic portals of

power is much too mysterious, and along the way, Crawford gets only one truly rousing scene on the stump as, hung over and fed-up, he throws away a prepared speech and wings it with populist Huey Long-like rhetoric. The rest is too naggingly preachy about absolute power corrupting absolutely, and too full of facile fascist and gangster-movie images. Still dynamic, however, is the off-beat casting of odd types like Ireland and McCambridge with their angular faces and abrasive voices hinting at the intelligence that helped make the film one of the best flowerings of late '40s social consciousness. **Titus Theater 1, Museum of Modern Art: 5 p.m.; also, Friday the 22nd at 6 p.m.**