

Document Citation

Title	A streetcar named desire
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Source	<i>San Francisco Bay Guardian</i>
Date	1994 Feb 09
Type	article
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	A Streetcar named desire, Kazan, Elia, 1951

2/9/94

~~San Francisco~~ San Francisco Bay Guardian

Critic's Choice: Film



'A Streetcar Named Desire'

IMMORAL," "sordid," and "perverse" are just a few of the adjectives used to describe the script for the 1951 film adaptation of Tennessee Williams' Pulitzer-winning play, *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Fighting long, hard battles with Joseph Breen (the enforcer of Hollywood's conservative Production Code) and other would-be censors, Williams and director Elia Kazan reluctantly conceded to revise portions of *Streetcar* only to find out later that nearly four minutes of the film — mostly dialogue — had been axed without their consent in a final editing session. Thankfully, the bulk of that lost material was discovered in a Van Nuys vault in 1989 and put back into a restored version of the picture — the so-called director's cut — which arrives in S.F. next week. Though the changes are relatively minor, there are a couple that sharpen the film's harsher and more sensual edges. Cuts or no cuts, *A Streetcar Named Desire* (which was nominated for 12 Oscars) is an eminently poetic, visually arresting tragedy, featuring some of the best performances ever committed to celluloid.

C A R T E R H A R R I S

'A Streetcar Named Desire.' Opens Fri/11. Through Feb. 24. Call for times. Castro Theatre, Castro at Market, S.F. (415) 621-6120.