

## Document Citation

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Ray, Nicholas

# films of Nicholas Ray

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"There is the theatre (Griffith), poetry (Murnau), painting (Rossellini), dance (Eisenstein), music (Renoir). But there is also the cinema. And the cinema is Nicholas Ray."

- Jean-Luc Godard

Nicholas Ray's career lasted from 1948 to 1963 (although there are perennial rumors that he is about to make a new film). He always displays an exciting, kinetic visual style, and an acute moral sensibility. Ray's best-known film is REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE (which, regrettably, we are unable to show due to the unavailability of prints in the proper screen ratio). Most of his films focus with almost unbearable accuracy and precision on the nightmare world of American society, which Ray sees as drab, mercenary, and over-competitive. Many of his characters resort to dreams, fantasies and violence to attempt a sort of Baudelairean escape. Ray worked with many superb actors - Humphrey Bogart, Robert Ryan, John Wayne, James Dean, James Mason, Richard Burton, Anthony Quinn, Peter O'Toole - and he always brought his personal vision to his films with force and artistry.

Nov 5: KNOCK ON ANY DOOR (1949) Cobb 8:00 75¢

Humphrey Bogart defends slum boy John Derek on a charge of murder. In one of his early films, Ray brings style, meaning and personality to a 1940's "message" picture, while examining the social causes of delinquency in the city. KNOCK ON ANY DOOR's visual commentary on morality makes it a thematic predecessor to REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE. The first three minutes of the film alone are worth the price of admission.

Nov 12: THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS (1960) Cobb 8:00 75¢

A white man (Peter O'Toole) intrudes upon the world of an uncivilized Eskimo (Anthony Quinn). Each man is ignorant of the other's moral code; THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS is a strong study of cultural relativity and man's behavior under stress. Also a fascinating semi-documentary study of the life of the Eskimos, THE SAVAGE INNOCENTS was the last film Ray made where he had control over the final print. [CinemaScope, color]

Nov 19: FLYING LEATHERNECKS (1951) Cobb 7:00 75¢ for both  
John Wayne stars as a pilot during World War II, trying to convince the brass that his plans for low-level air attacks on the Japanese at Guadalcanal will work. FLYING LEATHERNECKS is a story of inter-service rivalries and struggles. With Robert Ryan [color]

BIGGER THAN LIFE (1956) Cobb 9:00

BIGGER THAN LIFE is a masterpiece; quite possibly Ray's best film, it was cited by Jean-Luc Godard as one of the 10 best American sound films. James Mason gives a superb performance as a schoolteacher who gradually goes mad under the influence of a pain-killing drug. Walter Matthau is a friend who tries to help him. Photographed in color and CinemaScope by Joe MacDonald, one of Hollywood's most underrated cameramen.

Nov 26: RUN FOR COVER (1955) Cobb 8:00 75¢

Ray's Westerns display his characteristic concern with violence and shifting moral relationships. In RUN FOR COVER, Jimmy Cagney faces a lynch mob twice - once as its intended victim, and once as a sheriff. Suspense and violent action compliment Ray's least-known Western. With Ernest Borgnine.