

double indemnity james m cain

Double Indemnity James M Cain: Unraveling the Classic Noir Masterpiece

double indemnity james m cain is a phrase that instantly transports lovers of crime fiction and film noir into the smoky, shadowy world of the 1930s and 1940s. This phrase refers to the seminal work of James M. Cain, whose novella **Double Indemnity** not only redefined the crime genre but also laid the groundwork for what would become a quintessential Hollywood noir film. Understanding the significance of **Double Indemnity** means diving into its plot, themes, and legacy, along with its place in the career of Cain, one of America's foremost crime writers.

The Origins of Double Indemnity by James M Cain

James M. Cain was already an established writer by the time he penned **Double Indemnity** in 1936. Known primarily for his tight, fast-paced narrative style and morally ambiguous characters, Cain's work often explored the darker side of human nature, particularly focusing on crime and passion. **Double Indemnity** was originally published in **Liberty** magazine and later included in Cain's 1943 collection titled **Three of a Kind**.

The story's title refers to a specific clause found in some life insurance policies that doubles the payout if the insured's death is accidental. This piece of insurance jargon becomes a crucial plot device in the novella, driving the entire story's tension and eventual tragedy.

The Plot and Its Twists

At its core, **Double Indemnity** tells the story of Walter Huff, an insurance salesman who becomes ensnared in a dangerous plot with Phyllis Dietrichson, a seductive and cunning woman. Together, they conspire to murder her husband and collect on a double indemnity clause in his policy. The narrative unfolds as a confession from Huff, revealing layers of deceit, greed, and fatal attraction.

What makes Cain's storytelling so gripping is his ability to create complex characters who are neither entirely good nor evil. Walter Huff is a man driven by desire and weakness, while Phyllis presents a classic femme fatale persona—both figures emblematic of noir archetypes.

The Impact of Double Indemnity on Crime Fiction and Film Noir

Double Indemnity is often credited as one of the cornerstones of the noir genre, not just in literature but also in cinema. Its influence extends far beyond the written page.

From Page to Screen: The 1944 Film Adaptation

One of the most famous adaptations of Cain's novella is the 1944 film directed by Billy Wilder, starring Fred MacMurray and Barbara Stanwyck. The film retained much of the novella's dark tone and moral ambiguity, and it is celebrated for its sharp dialogue, atmospheric cinematography, and tight pacing. This adaptation played a pivotal role in defining the visual style and thematic concerns of film noir: chiaroscuro lighting, cynical characters, and fatalistic plots.

Interestingly, the collaboration between Cain's narrative prowess and Wilder's cinematic vision created a timeless classic that continues to be studied and admired. The movie elevated *Double Indemnity* to a cultural phenomenon, influencing countless filmmakers and writers.

The Noir Elements That Cain Perfected

James M. Cain's work, especially *Double Indemnity*, helped popularize several noir staples:

- **Morally Ambiguous Protagonists:** Characters who operate in shades of gray, making flawed decisions that lead to their downfall.
- **Femme Fatale:** The dangerous woman whose allure can be deadly.
- **Fatalism:** A sense of inevitable doom that haunts the narrative.
- **Crime and Punishment:** Exploration of criminal acts intertwined with psychological complexity.

These elements have become synonymous with noir fiction and cinema, cementing Cain's status as a pioneer in the genre.

James M Cain's Writing Style and Themes in Double Indemnity

What sets *Double Indemnity* apart from other crime stories of its time is Cain's distinctive prose style and thematic focus. His writing is succinct, direct, and punchy—qualities that make the story fast-moving and immersive.

Realism and Psychological Depth

Cain's background as a journalist is evident in his crisp, unadorned style. He cuts to the chase, avoiding unnecessary flourishes while still providing enough detail to paint vivid scenes. This realism grounds the story, making the characters' motivations and actions believable.

More importantly, Cain delves deeply into the psychology of his characters. Walter Huff's internal conflicts, his rationalizations, guilt, and eventual unraveling are portrayed with nuance. Similarly, Phyllis Dietrichson's manipulative but vulnerable nature adds layers to the narrative, making it more than just a simple whodunit.

Themes of Desire, Greed, and Betrayal

At its heart, **Double Indemnity** is a study of human desires gone awry. The novella explores how greed and lust can blind individuals to consequences, leading them down destructive paths. The insurance scam is not just a plot device but a metaphor for the darker impulses lurking beneath ordinary facades.

Betrayal, both personal and moral, permeates the story. The characters betray their spouses, their employers, and ultimately themselves. Cain's exploration of trust and deception remains relevant, resonating with readers and viewers today.

Why Double Indemnity by James M Cain Still Matters Today

Despite being written over 80 years ago, **Double Indemnity** continues to captivate audiences. Its timeless themes, compelling characters, and masterful storytelling transcend the era in which it was created.

Lessons for Modern Writers and Storytellers

For anyone interested in crime fiction or noir, studying Cain's **Double Indemnity** offers invaluable insights:

- **Economy of Language:** Cain's concise style shows that less can be more when it comes to building suspense and character.
- **Complex Characters:** Avoid black-and-white morality; embrace flawed, multifaceted personalities.
- **Tight Plotting:** Every scene and line of dialogue should propel the story forward.
- **Atmosphere and Tone:** Creating a mood is essential to immerse readers and viewers.

By analyzing how Cain balances these elements, modern storytellers can craft narratives that feel both timeless and fresh.

Enduring Cultural Influence

Double Indemnity has inspired numerous adaptations, homages, and reinterpretations in various media. Its archetypes—the doomed antihero, the fatal woman, the criminal scheme—appear repeatedly in literature, television, and film. Moreover, the novella has become a textbook example of the noir genre's power to reflect societal anxieties, particularly around trust, morality, and the darker facets of human nature.

For fans of classic crime fiction or those curious about the roots of noir, diving into **Double Indemnity** by James M Cain is a rewarding experience that offers both entertainment and a deeper

understanding of the genre's evolution.

From its gripping plot to its profound psychological insights, *Double Indemnity* remains a shining example of James M Cain's genius. Whether you encounter it as a novella or a classic film, the story's power to enthrall and provoke thought endures, reminding us why Cain's work is still celebrated in literary and cinematic circles alike.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is 'Double Indemnity' by James M. Cain about?

'Double Indemnity' is a crime novel by James M. Cain that tells the story of an insurance salesman who is seduced by a woman into helping her murder her husband to collect on his life insurance policy with a double indemnity clause.

When was 'Double Indemnity' by James M. Cain first published?

'Double Indemnity' was first published in 1943 as a serial in Liberty magazine before being released as a novel.

How does James M. Cain's writing style in 'Double Indemnity' contribute to the noir genre?

Cain's terse, direct prose and first-person narrative create a tense, cynical atmosphere that exemplifies the hard-boiled noir style, emphasizing moral ambiguity and fatalism.

What inspired James M. Cain to write 'Double Indemnity'?

Cain was inspired by real-life insurance fraud cases and his interest in the darker aspects of human nature, combining crime and psychological drama in 'Double Indemnity.'

How faithful is the 1944 film adaptation of 'Double Indemnity' to James M. Cain's novel?

The 1944 film adaptation remains largely faithful to Cain's novel, capturing the plot's tension and moral complexity, though some details and characters were altered or condensed for cinematic purposes.

What themes are explored in James M. Cain's 'Double Indemnity'?

The novel explores themes such as greed, betrayal, moral corruption, fate, and the consequences of

crime, highlighting the dark side of human nature.

Why is 'Double Indemnity' considered a classic in crime fiction and noir literature?

'Double Indemnity' is considered a classic because of its pioneering narrative style, compelling characters, and its influence on the development of the noir genre, setting a standard for crime fiction with its gritty realism and psychological depth.

Additional Resources

Double Indemnity James M Cain: A Closer Look at the Noir Classic

double indemnity james m cain stands as a seminal work in the canon of American crime fiction, blending sharp narrative craft with dark, psychological insight. Originally published in 1943, this novella not only cemented James M. Cain's reputation as a master of the hardboiled genre but also laid the foundation for one of the most influential film noirs of the mid-20th century. Its enduring appeal stems from the taut storytelling, morally ambiguous characters, and a plot that explores themes of greed, betrayal, and fatal attraction.

This article investigates the literary significance of Double Indemnity, its impact on noir fiction, and the distinctive qualities that set Cain's work apart from his contemporaries. By analyzing the novella within the broader cultural and cinematic landscape, we uncover why "double indemnity james m cain" continues to resonate with readers, critics, and filmmakers alike.

James M. Cain and the Birth of Hardboiled Noir

James M. Cain emerged during the 1930s as one of the defining voices of hardboiled crime fiction, a style characterized by terse prose, morally complex characters, and gritty urban settings. Unlike the more cerebral detective stories of earlier decades, Cain's narratives were visceral and emotionally charged, often focusing on the psychology of criminals rather than the mechanics of crime-solving.

Double Indemnity exemplifies these traits. The novella tells the story of Walter Neff, an insurance salesman who becomes entangled in a deadly scheme with Phyllis Dietrichson, a seductive femme fatale plotting to murder her husband and collect on a double indemnity clause in his life insurance policy. Cain's economical writing style strips away extraneous details, delivering a narrative pulse that mirrors the escalating tension and inevitable downfall of its protagonists.

Plot and Narrative Structure

The story's structure is tightly constructed, told in the form of a confession by Walter Neff, which adds a layer of immediacy and intimacy. This first-person narrative draws readers into the protagonist's mindset, exposing the rationalizations and self-deceptions that accompany his descent into crime. Cain's use of a confessional framework also heightens suspense, as readers are privy to Neff's inner turmoil even as events spiral beyond his control.

Moreover, the “double indemnity” clause—an insurance policy feature that pays double in the event of accidental death—serves as a clever plot device that introduces both motive and irony. The meticulous planning of the crime, followed by its unraveling, reflects Cain’s understanding of human folly and the consequences of greed-driven choices.

Literary Style and Themes

Cain’s prose in *Double Indemnity* is notable for its directness and precision. Eschewing elaborate descriptions, he employs a stripped-down style that mirrors the bleakness and moral ambiguity of the story’s world. This economical language intensifies the emotional impact, allowing the characters’ actions and dialogue to carry the weight of the narrative.

Several themes dominate the novella:

- **Moral Ambiguity:** Neither Walter Neff nor Phyllis Dietrichson fit into simple categories of hero or villain. Their motivations are complex, blending attraction, desperation, and cynicism.
- **Fatalism:** The story conveys a sense of inevitability, where choices lead inexorably to destruction.
- **Greed and Corruption:** The allure of financial gain propels the characters into a web of deceit and murder.
- **Gender Dynamics:** The femme fatale archetype embodied by Phyllis is a critical element, representing both empowerment and destructive manipulation.

This thematic richness contributes to the novella’s status as a classic noir narrative, influencing countless works in literature and film.

Comparison with Other Works by James M. Cain

While *Double Indemnity* remains Cain’s most celebrated work, it shares thematic and stylistic elements with his other major novels such as *The Postman Always Rings Twice* and *Mildred Pierce*. Like *Double Indemnity*, these stories explore the darker sides of human nature, focusing on flawed characters driven by passion or desperation.

However, *Double Indemnity* is distinguished by its concise novella format, which delivers an intense, focused narrative experience. The story’s brevity enhances its impact, eschewing subplots and extraneous characters in favor of a streamlined exploration of crime and consequence.

The Cinematic Legacy of Double Indemnity

The influence of “double indemnity james m cain” extends well beyond literature. The 1944 film adaptation directed by Billy Wilder is widely regarded as a landmark of film noir, capturing the novella’s tension and moral ambiguity with stylistic flair. The movie’s sharp dialogue, shadowy cinematography, and iconic performances helped define the visual and thematic vocabulary of noir cinema.

Adaptation and Fidelity

Billy Wilder’s adaptation remains remarkably faithful to Cain’s source material, preserving the core narrative and character dynamics. However, the film expands certain elements, such as the role of Barton Keyes, the insurance investigator, adding layers of dramatic irony and suspicion. This character’s moral compass contrasts with Neff’s descent, enriching the story’s exploration of justice and guilt.

The screenplay, co-written by Wilder and Raymond Chandler, incorporates punchy, memorable dialogue that complements Cain’s terse prose. The film’s voice-over narration, mirroring Neff’s confession, reinforces the novella’s intimate perspective.

Impact on Noir Genre

Double Indemnity’s success set a new standard for noir storytelling, influencing numerous films and novels in the decades that followed. Its combination of psychological complexity, moral ambiguity, and stylistic innovation helped shape the genre’s conventions.

The archetype of the cynical, self-destructive antihero paired with a manipulative femme fatale became a hallmark of noir, echoed in works ranging from Chinatown to Body Heat. Moreover, the story’s exploration of insurance fraud and financial crime introduced a novel angle to crime fiction, broadening the thematic scope of the genre.

Double Indemnity in Contemporary Context

Today, Double Indemnity remains relevant both as a literary work and a cultural touchstone. Its themes of greed, betrayal, and moral compromise continue to resonate amid modern concerns about ethics in business and personal relationships. The novella’s concise, impactful storytelling also serves as a model for writers seeking to convey complex narratives with economy and style.

For readers and scholars, “double indemnity james m cain” offers a rich text for analysis, exemplifying how genre fiction can probe profound human truths. Its influence on popular culture underscores the enduring power of well-crafted storytelling that challenges readers to confront uncomfortable realities.

Pros and Cons of the Novella's Format

- **Pros:** The novella's brevity ensures a fast-paced, gripping narrative that maintains tension throughout. Its focus on a small cast of characters allows for deep psychological exploration without unnecessary distractions.
- **Cons:** Some readers might find the character development limited by the short format, craving more background or nuance. Additionally, the story's dated elements, such as gender roles, may feel less accessible to contemporary audiences without contextual understanding.

Nonetheless, these limitations do not diminish the work's status as a foundational text in crime fiction and noir literature.

In tracing the trajectory of "double indemnity james m cain," one observes not only a masterful example of hardboiled fiction but also a narrative that transcends its era. Through its incisive portrayal of flawed characters and moral complexities, the novella continues to captivate and inspire, affirming James M. Cain's place among the great American storytellers.

[Double Indemnity James M Cain](#)

double indemnity james m cain: Double Indemnity James M. Cain, 2011-01-05 ONE OF TIME MAGAZINE'S 100 BEST MYSTERY AND THRILLER BOOKS OF ALL TIME • James M. Cain, virtuoso of the roman noir, gives us a tautly narrated and excruciatingly suspenseful story in *Double Indemnity*, an X-ray view of guilt, of duplicity, and of the kind of obsessive, loveless love that devastates everything it touches. Walter Huff was an insurance salesman with an unfailing instinct for clients who might be in trouble, and his instinct led him to Phyllis Nirdlinger. Phyllis wanted to buy an accident policy on her husband. Then she wanted her husband to have an accident. Walter wanted Phyllis. To get her, he would arrange the perfect murder and betray everything he had ever lived for.

double indemnity james m cain: Double Indemnity James Mallahan Cain, 2002 DOUBLE INDEMNITY is the classic tale of an evil woman motivated by greed who corrupts a weak man motivated by lust. Walter Huff is an insurance investigator like any other until the day he meets the beautiful and dangerous Phyllis Nirdlinger and falls under her spell. Together they plot to kill her husband and split the insurance. It ll be the perfect murder THE AUTHOR James M. Cain was born in Annapolis, Maryland, in 1892. Having served in the US Army in World War 1, he became a journalist in Baltimore and New York in the 1920's. He later worked as a screenwriter in Hollywood. Cain died in 1977.

double indemnity james m cain: Dead Man James M. Cain, 2021-10-26 In this powerful tale of guilt, a short story from James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Double Indemnity*, *Mildred Pierce*, and *Selected Stories*, a desperate man is driven to the edge of madness after he accidentally kills a railroad detective. As the murderer works to get his alibi straight, he soon discovers that the prick of his own conscience is just as oppressive as the long arm of the law. A Vintage Short.

double indemnity james m cain: Disabling Cain Michelle Amelia Flynn, 2000

double indemnity james m cain: *Double Indemnity and ; The Embezzler* James Mallahan Cain, 1981

double indemnity james m cain: Three Novels by James M. Cain James Mallahan Cain, 1964

double indemnity james m cain: *The Postman Always Rings Twice, Double Indemnity, Mildred Pierce, and Selected Stories* James M. Cain, 2003-07-22 These three classics from the master of the noir novel, along with five otherwise unavailable short stories, are electric with the taut narrative voice, the suspense, and the explosive violence and eroticism that were James M. Cain's indelible hallmarks. *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, Cain's first novel—the subject of an obscenity trial in Boston, the inspiration for Camus's *The Stranger*—is the fever-pitched tale of a drifter who stumbles into a job, into an erotic obsession, and into a murder. *Double Indemnity*—which followed *Postman* so quickly, Cain's readers hardly had a chance to catch their breath—is a tersely narrated story of blind passion, duplicity, and, of course, murder. *Mildred Pierce*, a work of acute psychological observation and devastating emotional violence, is the tale of a woman with a taste for shiftless men and an unreasoned devotion to her monstrous daughter. All three novels were immortalized in classic Hollywood films. Also included here are five masterful stories—"Pastorale," "The Baby in the Icebox," "Dead Man," "Brush Fire," "The Girl in the Storm"—that have been out of print for decades.

double indemnity james m cain: *Blackout* Sheri Chinen Biesen, 2005-11-11 Sheri Chinen Biesen challenges conventional thinking on the origins of film noir and finds the genre's roots in the political, social and historical conditions of Hollywood during the Second World War.

double indemnity james m cain: *Huffed Masculinity. The Female Threat in Cain's "Double Indemnity"* Stephan Riedl, 2017-05-23 Seminar paper from the year 2016 in the subject English Language and Literature Studies - Literature, grade: 2,0, University of Koblenz-Landau, language: English, abstract: *Double Indemnity* was first published in 1935 and affirmed James M. Cain's status as a novelist. By reading it, one can learn why, but that is not the only observation that can be made. It is noticeable that Phyllis, the Femme Fatale of the story, constantly oversteps the boundaries of her gender, thus posing a threat to men. The question that started this Term Paper was: How much of a threat to patriarchal masculinity is Phyllis and is this threat contained? The thesis is that Phyllis subverts patriarchal masculinity in two spheres, the business sphere and the domestic sphere and by doing this, threatens it. The goal is to look at several instances where she does it and deduct if the threat she poses is contained or not. In order to prove this thesis, a very short overview of the concept of sex and gender will be given which is a basic concept in cultural studies and needed when moving on to discuss masculinity during the 1930s. This will be followed by a look at the term hard-boiled fiction as it was perceived back then and the main character and the femme fatale of said genre. The literary analysis consists of a look at the world itself by using Huff's casino metaphor, a closer look at Phyllis's and Mr. Nirdlinger's relationship, concluded with Phyllis's motivation. Based on the theory and the analysis, it will be discussed if the female threat is contained or not and an outlook will be given.

double indemnity james m cain: The Philosophy of the Coen Brothers Mark T. Conard, 2008-12-12 "Written for both fans of the Coen brothers and the philosophically curious, without the technical language . . . educational and entertaining." —Library Journal Joel and Ethan Coen have made films that redefined the gangster movie, the screwball comedy, the fable, and the film noir, but no matter what genre they're playing with, they consistently focus on the struggles of complex characters to understand themselves and their places in the strange worlds they inhabit. To borrow a phrase from Barton Fink, all Coen films explore "the life of the mind" and show that the human condition can often be simultaneously comic and tragic, profound and absurd. The essays in this book explore the challenging moral and philosophical terrain of the Coen repertoire. Several address how Coen films often share film noir's essential philosophical assumptions: power corrupts, evil is real, and human control of fate is an illusion. In *Fargo*, not even Minnesota's blankets of snow can

hide Jerry Lundegaard's crimes or brighten his long, dark night of the soul. The tale of love, marriage, betrayal, and divorce in *Intolerable Cruelty* transcends the plight of the characters to illuminate competing theories of justice. Even in lighter fare, such as *Raising Arizona* and *The Big Lebowski*, the comedy emerges from characters' journeys to the brink of an amoral abyss. However, the Coens often knowingly and gleefully subvert conventions and occasionally offer symbolic rebirths and other hopeful outcomes. At the end of *The Big Lebowski*, for example, the Dude abides, his laziness has become a virtue, and the human comedy is perpetuating itself with the promised arrival of a newborn Lebowski. The *Philosophy of the Coen Brothers* sheds new light on the work of these cinematic visionaries. From *Blood Simple* to *No Country for Old Men*, the Coens' characters look for answers—though in some cases, their quest for answers leads, at best, only to more questions.

double indemnity james m cain: *A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Film Noir* John Grant, 2023-09-21 Featuring rumpled PIs, shyster lawyers, corrupt politicians, double-crossers, femmes fatales, and, of course, losers who find themselves down on their luck yet again, film noir is a perennially popular cinematic genre. This extensive encyclopedia describes movies from noir's earliest days - and even before, looking at some of noir's ancestors in US and European cinema - as well as noir's more recent offshoots, from neonoirs to erotic thrillers. Entries are arranged alphabetically, covering movies from all over the world - from every continent save Antarctica - with briefer details provided for several hundred additional movies within those entries. A copious appendix contains filmographies of prominent directors, actors, and writers. With coverage of blockbusters and program fillers from *Going Straight* (US 1916) to *Broken City* (US 2013) via *Nora Inu* (Japan 1949), *O Anthropos tou Trainou* (Greece 1958), *El Less Wal Kilab* (Egypt 1962), *Reportaje a la Muerte* (Peru 1993), *Zift* (Bulgaria 2008), and thousands more, *A Comprehensive Encyclopedia of Film Noir* is an engrossing and essential reference work that should be on the shelves of every cinephile.

double indemnity james m cain: *Uncontained* Elizabeth A. Wheeler, 2001 In the post-war era, American urban fiction was dominated by the imagery of containment. This book offers a critique of this familiar story, evident in the noir narratives of James M. Cain and in work by Ellison, Roth, Salinger, Percy, Capote and others.

double indemnity james m cain: *The Recursive Frontier* Michael Docherty, 2024-05-01 *The Recursive Frontier* is an innovative spatial history of both the literature of Los Angeles and the city itself in the mid-twentieth century. Setting canonical texts alongside underexamined works and sources such as census bulletins and regional planning documents, Michael Docherty identifies the American frontier as the defining dynamic of Los Angeles fiction from the 1930s to the 1950s. Contrary to the received wisdom that Depression-era narratives mourn the frontier's demise, Docherty argues that the frontier lives on as a cruel set of rules for survival in urban modernity, governing how texts figure race, space, mobility, and masculinity. Moving from dancehalls to offices to oil fields and beyond, the book provides a richer, more diverse picture of LA's literary production during this period, as well as a vivid account of LA's cultural and social development as it transformed into the multiethnic megalopolis we know today.

double indemnity james m cain: ***Some Like It Wilder*** Gene D. Phillips, 2010-02-05 A biography of the six-time Oscar-winning director of films like *Some Like It Hot* and *Double Indemnity*, featuring analysis of his work. Although his career spanned fifty years and included more than fifty films, Austrian-American film director Billy Wilder (1906-2002) may be best known for the legendary shot of Marilyn Monroe's dress billowing over a subway grating in *The Seven Year Itch* (1955). This "shot seen round the world" is representative not only of Hollywood's golden era of cinema but also of one of its most prolific and brilliant directors. Wilder, whose filmography includes such classics as *Sunset Boulevard* (1950), *Sabrina* (1954), *Witness for the Prosecution* (1957), and *Some Like It Hot* (1959), is often remembered for his versatility, biting wit, and passion for challenging social and moral conventions. Author Gene D. Phillips departs from the traditional biography in *Some Like It Wilder*, offering new insights into the acclaimed director's professional

and private life. In preparation for the book, Phillips conducted personal interviews with Wilder and other key players from the legendary director's life and times. Phillips's unique combination of analysis and biographical detail brings Wilder to life, as both an artist and man. Phillips traces Wilder's path from Berlin, where he worked as a scriptwriter for one of the city's largest studios, to Hollywood, where he would quickly establish himself as a premier film director. Forming a partnership with writer-producer Charles Brackett, Wilder directed the classic films *Five Graves to Cairo* (1943), *Double Indemnity* (1945), and *The Lost Weekend* (1945), which earned Academy Awards for best picture, best director, and best screenplay. During the 1960s, Wilder continued to direct and produce controversial comedies, including *Kiss Me Stupid* (1964) and *The Apartment* (1960). *The Apartment* brought Wilder another round of Oscars for best picture, best director, and best screenplay. Wilder's maverick approach and independent artistic vision pushed boundaries and ensured his legacy as one of the Hollywood greats. Sharply written, *Some Like It Wilder* serves as a comprehensive companion to Wilder's films, offering a personalized and heartfelt account of the life and genius of this compelling director. Praise for *Some Like It Wilder* "Featuring Gene D. Phillips' unique, in-depth critical approach, *Some Like It Wilder* . . . provides a groundbreaking overview of a filmmaking icon This definitive biography reveals that Wilder was, and remains, one of the most influential directors in filmmaking." —Turner Classic Movies "[Phillips] goes beyond the surface and deep into the complex mind and soul of the famous film director This book is, in my view, definitive." —Vincent LoBrutto, author of *Martin Scorsese: A Biography*

double indemnity james m cain: *Noir Affect* Christopher Breu, Elizabeth A. Hatmaker, 2020-06-02 *Noir Affect* proposes a new understanding of noir as defined by negative affect. This new understanding emphasizes that noir is, first and foremost, an affective disposition rather than a specific cycle of films or novels associated with a given time period or national tradition. Instead, the essays in *Noir Affect* trace noir's negativity as it manifests in different national contexts from the United States to Mexico, France, and Japan and in a range of different media, including films, novels, video games, and manga. The forms of affect associated with noir are resolutely negative: These are narratives centered on loss, sadness, rage, shame, guilt, regret, anxiety, humiliation, resentment, resistance, and refusal. Moreover, noir often asks us to identify with those on the losing end of cultural narratives, especially the criminal, the lost, the compromised, the haunted, the unlucky, the cast-aside, and the erotically "perverse," including those whose greatest erotic attachment is to death. Drawing on contemporary work in affect theory, while also re-orienting some of its core assumptions to address the resolutely negative affects narrated by noir, *Noir Affect* is invested in thinking through the material, bodily, social, and political-economic impact of the various forms noir affect takes. If much affect theory asks us to consider affect as a space of possibility and becoming, *Noir Affect* asks us to consider affect as also a site of repetition, dissolution, redundancy, unmaking, and decay. It also asks us to consider the way in which the affective dimensions of noir enable the staging of various forms of social antagonism, including those associated with racial, gendered, sexual, and economic inequality. Featuring an Afterword by the celebrated noir scholar Paula Rabinowitz and essays by an array of leading scholars, *Noir Affect* aims to fundamentally re-orient our understanding of noir. Contributors: Alexander Dunst, Sean Grattan, Peter Hitchcock, Justus Nieland, Andrew Pepper, Ignacio Sánchez Prado, Brian Rejack, Pamela Thoma, Kirin Wachter-Grene

double indemnity james m cain: *Contemporary Film Theory* Antony Easthope, 2014-07-22 During the twentieth century, the medium of film has developed as a means of understanding the complexity of modern life. Since 1968, film theory has concentrated not so much on theme or content but on the deeper question of how the medium works on its viewer. Film theory has been profoundly influenced by the writings of such modern thinkers as Saussure, Freud, Lacan, Derrida, and Kristeva. It combines modes of textual analysis relating to linguistics and semiology, a Marxist reading of ideology, and theories of subjectivity, the spectator and gender redefined by psychoanalysis. This judicious selection from key work by Stephen Heath, Fredric Jameson, Laura Mulvey, Mary Ann Doane and others, represents some of the most important

contemporary writing about film. It provides a consistent and developing analysis that will be of interest to students concerned with film and film studies, as well as students of cultural, media and communication studies.

double indemnity james m cain: How to Write It, How to Sell It Linda Palmer, 1998-05-15
As a producer and successful screenwriter, Linda Palmer knows all of Hollywood's trade secrets--and in *How to Write It, How to Sell It*, she shares them all. Linda Palmer knows that even in closed-door Hollywood, if your screenplay snags the interest of a producer, it doesn't matter who you are--you're in. The trick is getting your screenplay into the producer's hands. As a former vice president of production at Tristar Pictures and a credited screenwriter, Linda Palmer has a unique understanding of both sides of Hollywood's desk. In *How to Write It, How to Sell It*, she shares her knowledge with aspiring screenwriters, and she does so with the same charm the students of her popular UCLA Extension class have come to love and depend on. Straightforward and personable, Palmer uses the movies she loves to illustrate discussions of plot, structure, and character. From the layout of the page to the pitch to tips on sneaking by Hollywood's notorious readers, Palmer explains the business of show business as only one who knows it from the inside can.

double indemnity james m cain: Hard-boiled Sentimentality Leonard Cassuto, 2009
Leonard Cassuto's cultural history of the hard-boiled crime genre recovers the fascinating link between tough guys and sensitive women

double indemnity james m cain: The Essence of Film Noir Diana Royer, 2022-06-17
American classic films noir, beginning with 1941's *The Maltese Falcon* and ending with 1950's *Sunset Boulevard*, and the neo-noir films made from the 1970s onward, share certain thematic aspects, stylistic qualities, and cultural contexts. Their concern with politics, their depiction of con artists, and the way their characters are shaped by America's puritanical religious roots show that these films are examples of a unique American genre, even when the films' directors are German emigres with artistic roots in European Expressionism. The films' psychological depth is revealed stylistically through complex narratives, with select directors generating visual poetry as they deal with sex, violence and betrayal. Some films are based on popular novels inspired by true crime cases. A unique approach to film noir scholarship, this book discusses the genre's thematic aspects, cultural contexts and stylistic qualities. For those films based upon novels, in-depth analysis of the fiction is provided alongside the film version, resulting in a fuller, more thorough understanding of the genre.

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