



CAPTAIN GEORGE'S

# Penny Dreadful

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**YOU'LL BE HAUNTED BY  
THESE PEOPLE WHO MEET  
THEIR STARTLING DESTINY  
IN "NIGHTMARE ALLEY"!**



## TYRONE POWER

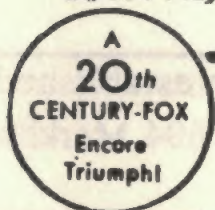
*in*

# NIGHTMARE ALLEY

with  
**JOAN BLONDELL • COLEEN GRAY • HELEN WALKER**

Directed by **EDMUND GOULDING** • Produced by **GEORGE JESSEL**

Screen Play by Jules Furthman • Based on the Novel by William Lindsay Gresham



## A WEEKLY REVIEW

# DON HUTCHISON

THE MAILBAG: The indefatigable Michael Avallone writes:

"Don Miller's HOLLYWOOD CORRAL is one of the most awesome, thoroughly researched and plain best-written tomes I've ever read on any subject. Despite some lamentable typos which really are mostly trivial, the entire project ought to get some kind of award and though I'm notorious for battling with Critics, this is one Expert who lassoes his subject, loves it, and communicates that love with a vengeance. Double Bravos and a hoot and a holler all the way to Lordsburg

"On the other side of the coin, Pete Harris' About-To-Go-Overboard verdict on Joe Gores" HAMMETT: You need some salt for the Black Bird's tale to see this 'novel' in proper perspective and only the future will take care of that. Hammett is not an ancient-enough figure for any novelist who didn't know him to get inside his mind and his mystique and movie him around as the main character in a work of fiction. That's all I have to say and Lillian Hellman would say a helluva lot more if anybody would pin her down. A clique has been working on the coasts, East and West, to elevate this book to Classic status and count-me-out.

"Let me put it this way.

"I'll do a New York thriller, make Rex Stout or Raymond Chandler the central figure to solve a crime and, well--the purists would howl just as loud."

\* \* \*

At the risk of puffing up a fellow columnist I have to echo Mike's assessment of Don Miller's book; it's really great--and still available, for those who have yet to read it.

An even more interesting work is Don's other book, "B" MOVIES, published by Curtis and now out of print. Don is unaware of this (until now) but back in 1973 when his B movie book was published, it received a terrific amount of praise from Robert Bloch. (For the two or three people in the civilized world who haven't heard of Bloch, he was the original author of Psycho, as well as being one of the world's great movie nuts.) At that time Bob had just read Don's book and even though he was unaware that I had any connection with Don, he said that he regarded it as being one of the most enjoyable books ever written about movies--and proceeded to talk about it for some time.

The only trouble with "B" MOVIES is that it should have been published in the same large-size quality format as HOLLYWOOD CORRAL. My little soft-cover original is becoming tattered from constant reference.

Hey, Don--why don't you sell a publisher on the idea of putting out a new, deluxe edition?

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# DON MILLER

**THE MYSTERY OF THE MISSING MOVIES:** How long has it been since the film version of Doc Savage was released, a year, two years? A pretty long time, anyway. For all I know, it may be one of the worst pics of the decade. Or one of the best, hard to tell. You see, to the best of knowledge Doc Savage hasn't played in New York City yet. Now, I'm sure it was released because star Ron Ely appeared on the Merv Griffin TV show way back and said so. Another reason I'm sure is because everyone outside New York reading this has probably seen it by now.

This is an example of what we in Fun City have to put up with, in addition to high taxes and risk of life and limb at any given hour of day or night. There seems to be some sort of spastic affliction in the filmbooking system here, whereby some interesting if fatally flawed films get locked out, while a number of screaming horrors not only get played in the local houses, but manage to get held over for two weeks or longer. On the other hand, some hits that start off like blazes are retained for seven, eight weeks and beyond, resulting in a boxoffice veteran struggling into its third month playing to something like an audience of five or so per performance. Not only poor business sense, but a twinge of insanity lurks behind the system.

All right, even granting the unplayed films are dogs, why not let us find out for ourselves, if only for variety's sake? Please, don't do us favors, just take our money. Give us the opportunity to see some of the following lemons of the past couple of seasons:

At Long Last Love, an alleged musical with Burt Reynolds & co., opened at the Radio City Music Hall, world's largest (6200 seats) house. An aromatic bomb from all reports. When it came time for the subsequent runs, the distributor quickly hid it in some Brooklyn and Bronx joints, letting it quietly drift out with the tide. Here on Staten Island it played one night, as a benefit for Hadassah, presumably booked by the Arabs. Hasn't been seen since.

Also opening at the Music Hall to concerted groans was The Bluebird, hailed as the first Russo-American co-production, a fact apparently likely to contribute to the commencement of World War III. Its neighborhood run was limited to weekend kiddie matinees, which may denote cruelty to children. We'll never know.

Liz Taylor, of aforesaid Bluebird, also had one in release entitled The Driver's Seat, produced in Italy. Or England. Or Yugoslavia. Not sure, never opened here. United Artists released two this summer, Vigilante Force and Trackdown. Names like Kris Kristofferson, Jan Michael Vincent, Jim Mitchum, Bernadette Peters... played together in one flea pit, but no other dates to date. And they holler about a product shortage. An MGM thriller, Nightmare Honeymoon, has been around almost four years, played around some. But it's never been shown to the critics, much less NY audiences. Are they mad at us?

# PETE HARRIS

**GAS STATION NOSTALGIA:** It's odd, I suppose, for one who doesn't drive to grow sentimental over old service stations, but I find them and the cars my parents owned over the years (especially a blue 1937 four-door Ford) firmly fixed in my mental scrapbook. One in particular I remember, circa 1940, was a Shell station in Lansing, Ont., wherein resided a reddish dog, mostly Irish terrier, with only three legs. True. His name was Jiggs and so, when our family liberated from the Humane Society pound a reddish dog of mixed ancestry, but mostly Irish terrier, no other name would do but Jiggs. Both Jiggses are long gone to that special place reserved for service station mutts and kids' favorite dogs. The Shell station is gone. Hell, even the Lansing I knew and loved is gone. But the memories linger on.

What brought all this on was a piece in the Jan. 2 New York Sunday News Magazine by a chap named John Margolies who obviously collects old filling stations, or rather photos of them. "I love old gas stations," Margolies' article begins, and right there he had me hooked. "I've cruised all over the continent searching out surviving great gas stations from the 'golden era' (1920-1950)... if you head into the boondocks on secondary roads, driving once again becomes the adventure it used to be, and you'll start coming across Cities Service signs, Sinclair dinosaurs, sleek porcelain enamel jobbies, and sometimes, but very rarely, incredible relics from the teens and 20s."

Margolies traces the history of the gas station from the turn of the century to the present day and the article is profusely illustrated with a variety of places he has photographed in his travels, including an old Joy station in Toronto which now pumps gas under the Premium banner.

There's only one point where I find myself disagreeing with him. He says, "Early on... the gas station evolved into the symbol of its company and products." And, he quotes a Gulf spokesman as saying: "Since you didn't see the gas itself, the building became the product's package." Ah, but you did see the gas itself, in those pumps with tall glass cylinders on top which the attendant filled with a hand pump and which, as the level fell, told him exactly how much he had put into each car's gas tank.

Margolies concludes: "Few value the old gas stations as humble monuments of our culture. Indeed they have been put down for years as ugly, dirty, smelly and noisy. I think some should be preserved as historic landmarks. As independent operators and neighborhood stations disappear, as station after station closes, these examples of Americana will become extinct like the nickel candy bar and the cigar store Indian."

And that may be sooner than you think, John, if the energy situation keeps deteriorating.