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**Welcome
to...**





FILM NOIR

A photograph of a movie theater interior. The theater is dark, with rows of seats visible in the foreground. A large white screen is illuminated by several spotlights from above. The text "Today's Movie..." is displayed in red on the screen.

Today's Movie...

Ernest Hemingway's
"The Killers"

EXPLOSIVELY

NEW

...IN

COLOR!



LEE MARVIN
ANGIE DICKINSON
JOHN CASSAVETES
RONALD REAGAN
OLI GOLAGER
GENE L. COON
DONALD SIEGEL

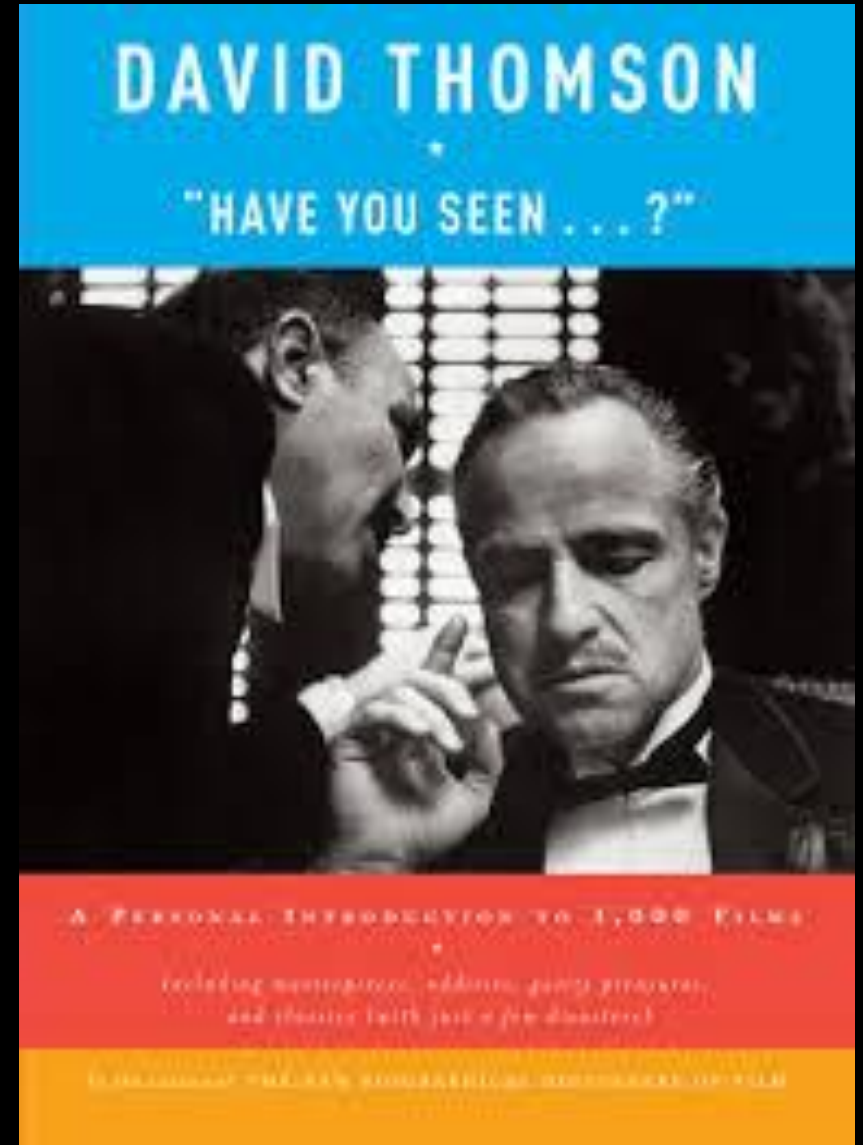
© 1950 MCA

- The TV **Killers** never set out to be a classic whereas the 1946 film felt loaded down with class from the start.

- But the real coup of the TV version is the boldness that realizes it's a story about **two thugs...They are the center of the film,** and that is enough to excuse the inert texture of the '64 Killers.

- They become **the engine of the film.**

- Don't minimize the impact the film had on **establishing the "Lee Marvin" image...here at a last new type is emerging in noir, the dutiful killer.**



- **The Killers**, made in 1964, was the first motion picture ever made specifically to play on television (NBC) but it never did.

- **Why?**

- A year after the Kennedy assassination, it was judged too violent and played instead in movie theaters.



New York Times Review

- Siegel's *The Killers* (is) a "more vivid, streamlined and callous" adaption of the Hemingway short story than director Robert Siodmark's.
- **The cast is first-rate.** Thanks to Marvin's sleek, snub-nosed menace and the edgy thrill-seeking projected by **Angie Dickinson's classy moll**, the movie exudes a cynical Rat Pack cool.

Film critic Judith M. Kass explains the ironic significance of the opening setting for *The Killers*—a school for the blind:

- The sightless students provide a clue to the film's symbolic stance: that **none of the protagonists are able to "see" the situation they are in nor the fateful course ahead of them.** And each is motivated by self-interest, so there is no possibility of co-operation between them.



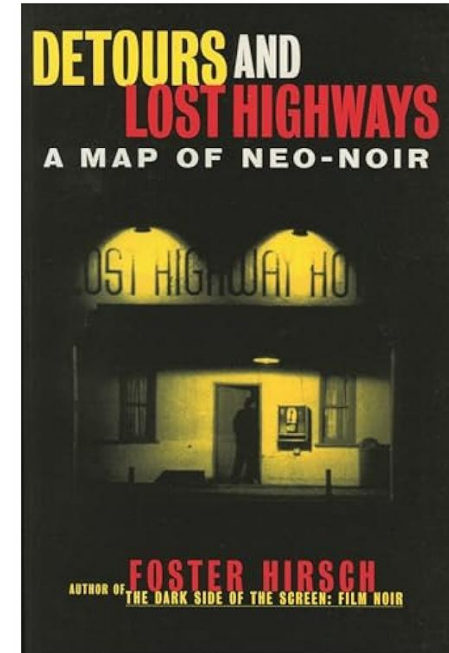
Biographer Judith M. Kass in *Don Siegel: The Hollywood Professions, Volume 4 (1975)*

- “*The Killers* elaborates in detail ideas which were present in less developed form in Siegel’s earlier movies. It is **deeply pessimistic: everyone is compromised** either through their associations, occupations or their pasts.”



A Negative View on this as a noir movie

- The almost startlingly inexpressive opening is a preview of the way Siegel (the director) tells a noir story in a style virtually cleansed of noir motifs
- The film takes place in environments that are stubbornly mute. Intermittently, noir motifs are used halfheartedly: a few ceiling shots, a few mirror shots,...Always problematic in noir, much of the film takes place outdoors.
- Except for Lee Marvin...the acting is noir deficient.



***The Killers*: A Decisive Reversal of Values**

By Geoffrey O'Brien (Criterion Collection)

Our recollections of Robert Siodmak's 1946 movie *The Killers* are apt to center on three primary elements: **Ernest Hemingway's story**, so literally brought to the screen in the film's opening scenes; **Ava Gardner**, and finally, **the impression of dreamy spectral density** evoked by Siodmak's Germanic camera play and the luminosity of Woody Bredell's **black-and-white cinematography**.

All these elements are notably missing from Don Siegel's remake.

• where Siodmak's film conjured up nocturnal shadows and emotional depths, **Siegel brings us into the harsh light of a casually violent and unrelievedly mercenary day.** All the gestures and situations that the forties made poetic and mysterious are here stripped of whatever made them glisten.



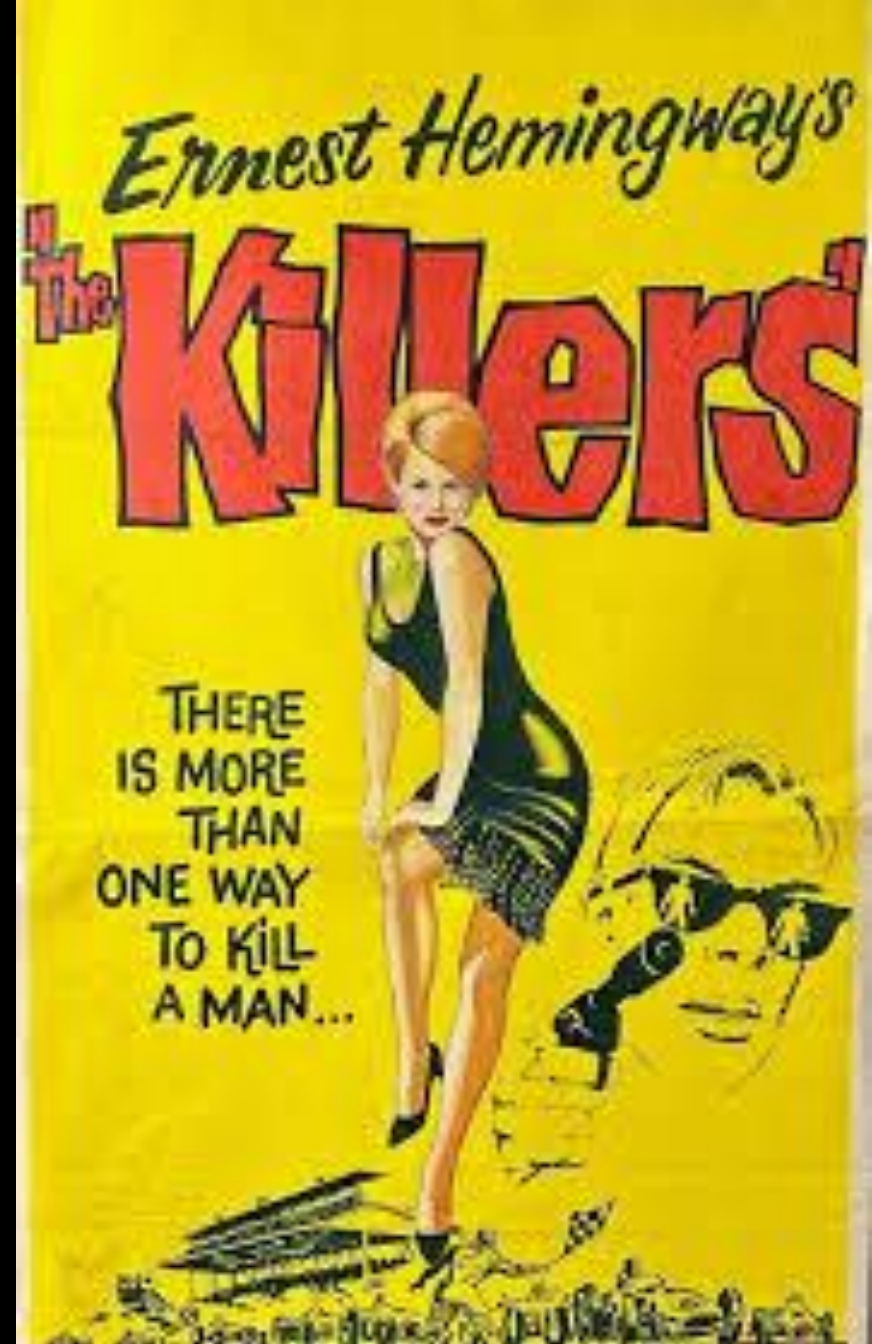
• We have left behind not only film noir but also that sense of a seamless counter-reality instilled by classic Hollywood cinema, and are moving toward a new era of American filmmaking that in 1964 had not quite arrived. The film's visual world is harsh and truncated, lacking any sense of depth or past. **What was up on the screen had a new tackiness that in many ways very much resembled the world outside the movie theater.**



- **BEFORE**
- **THE**
- **MOVIE**



- The director, Don Siegel, wanted the picture called to be named “Johnny North” after the lead character. The studio said no.
- The studio decided to call it “Ernest Hemingway’s ‘The Killers’” which Siegel hated since he felt it had just about no real connection with Hemingway’s short story, “The Killers.”



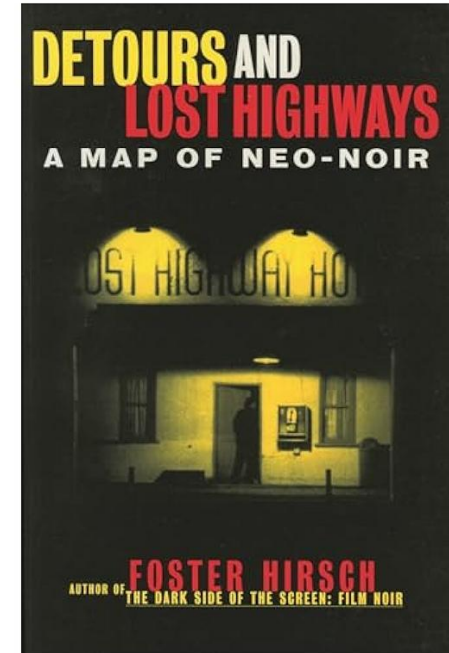
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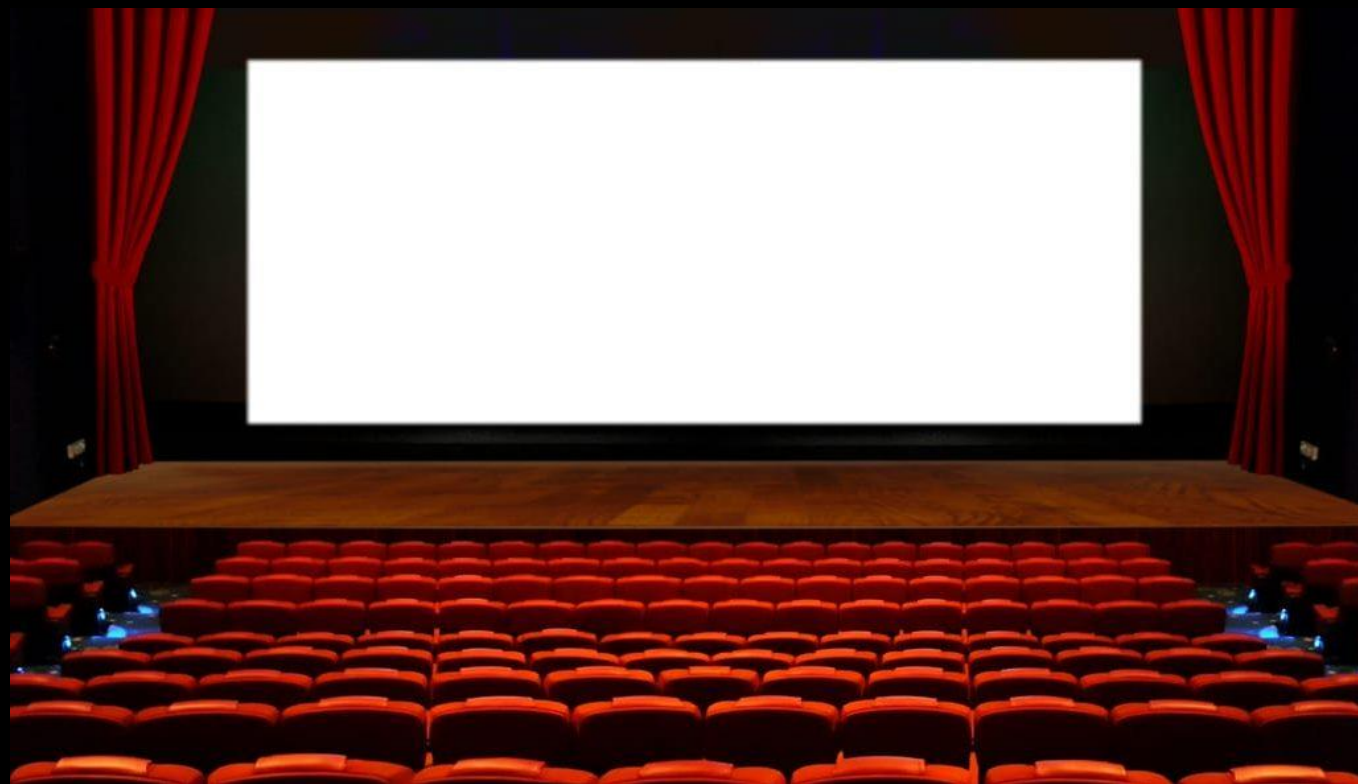


TCM

NOIR ALLEY

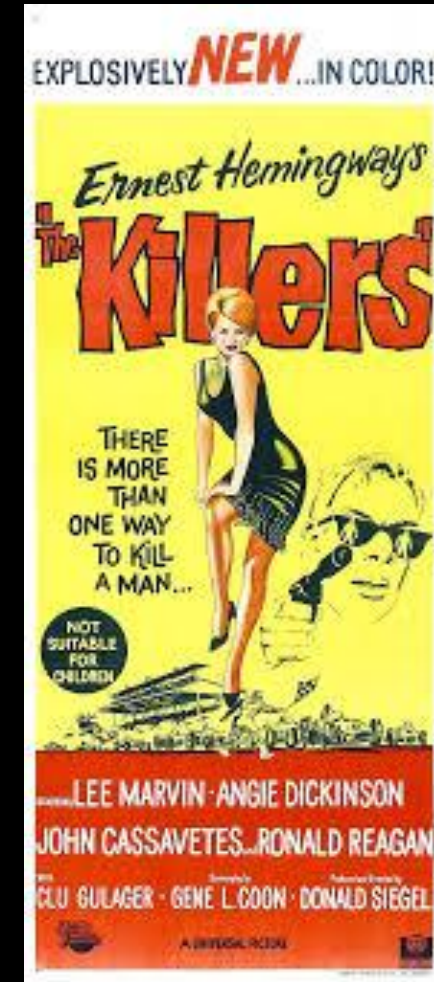
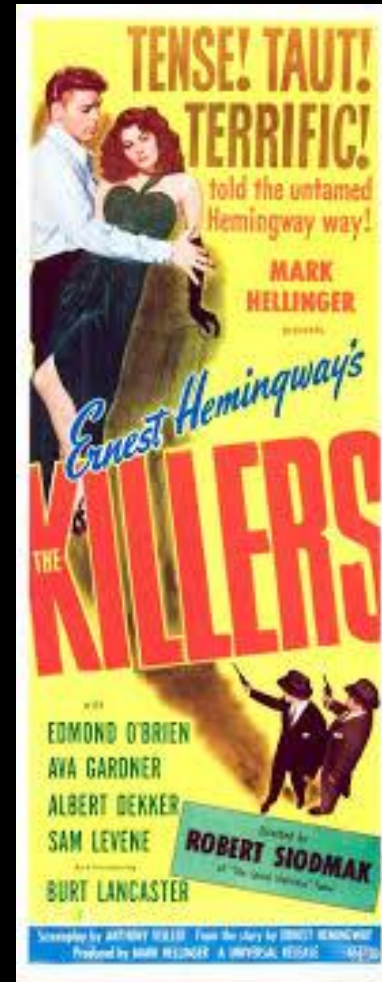
WITH EDDIE MULLER

After the Movie

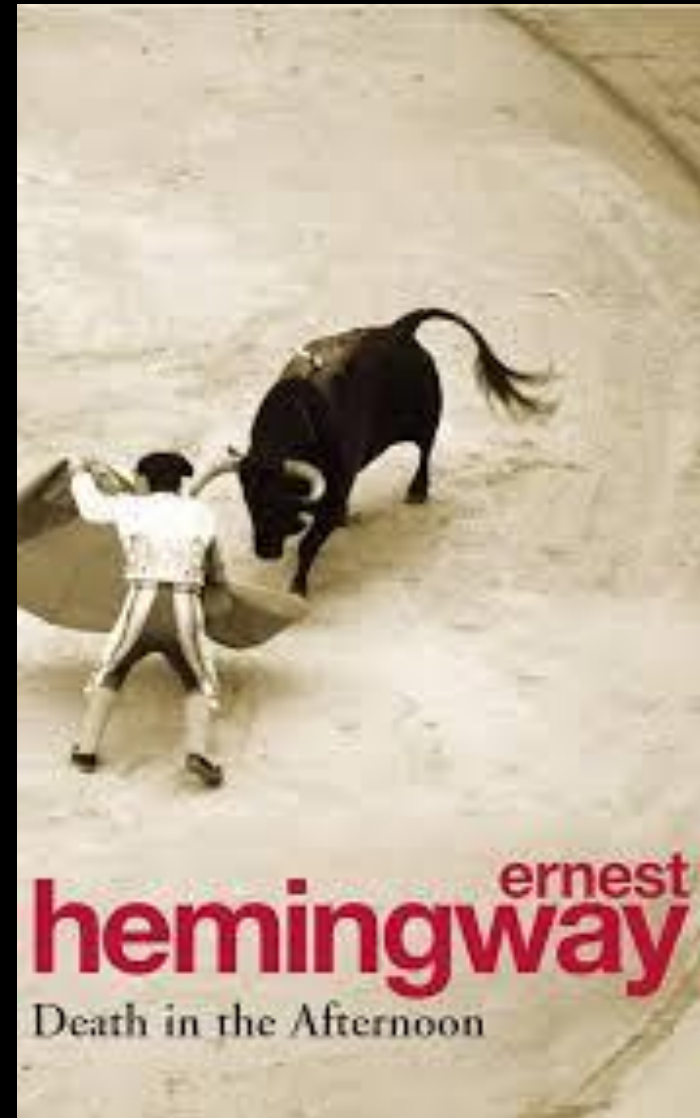


COMPARISON OF “THE KILLERS” – ’46 & ’64

- The '64 version is in very bright color. Why? Made for television and a small screen.
- The '64 version omits the typical noir style elements but it is still noir in its use of flashbacks into the past.
- The '64 version concentrates on the killers, the '46 on the insurance detective.



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- In the '64 version the lead protagonist --- Lee Marvin's character --- questions his own life and changes; in the '46 no character ever questions anything about their lives and therefore no one changes.
 - The "Swede" is a typical Hemingway hero: he accepts his fate without complaint. Hemingway flirted with calling his short story "The Matadors."
 - In the '64 version Reagan's character dies a Hemingway hero, not Dickenson's.



Quentin Tarantino on **The Killers**

•And
Next
Week



