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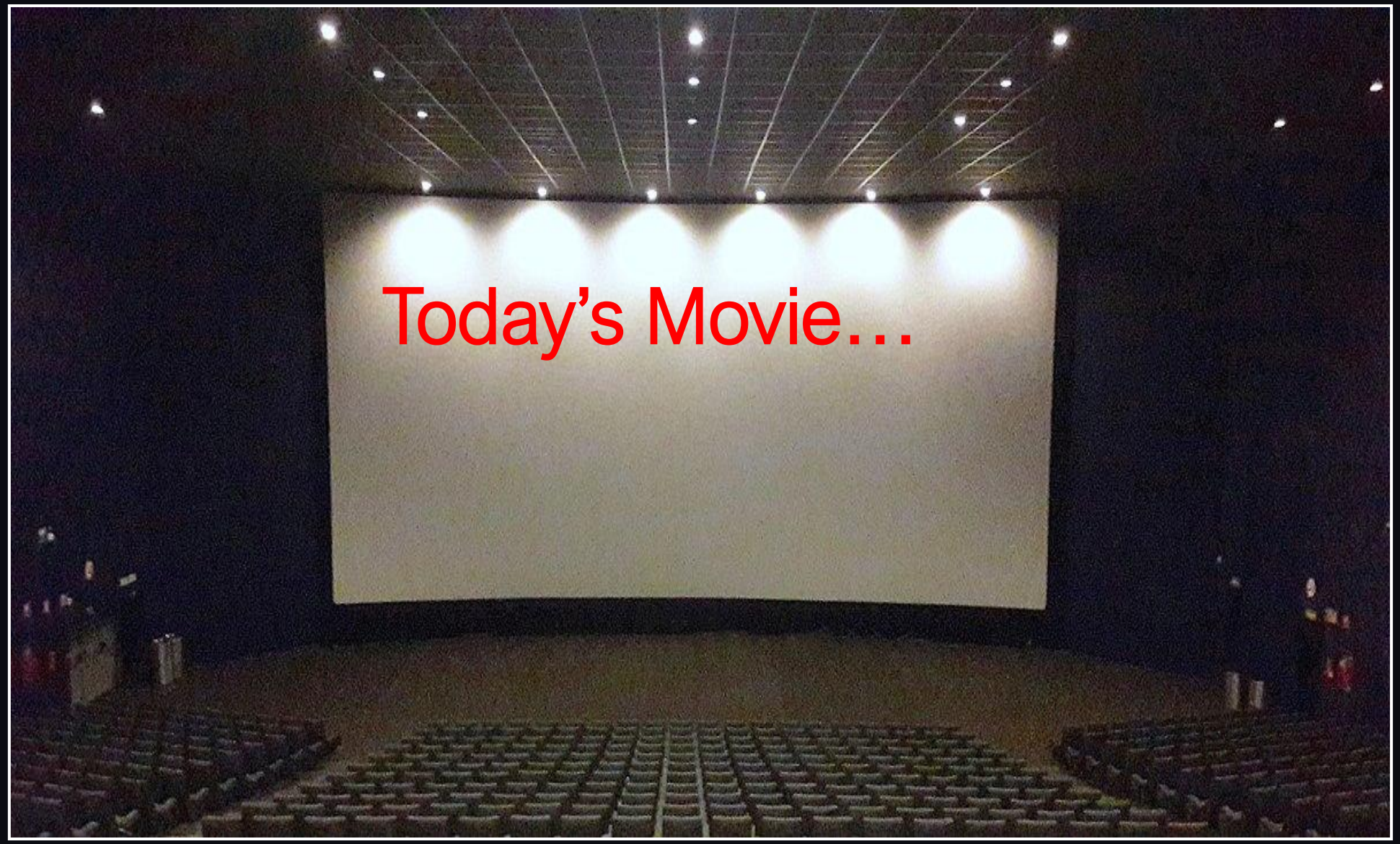
Welcome to…





FILM NOIR


Today's Movie…


TERRIFIC . . . and True!
THE RAW, SAVAGE, SCREEN-SEARING STORY OF THE TREASURY'S TOUGH GUYS!
T-MEN
Presented by EDWARD SMALL
STARRING
DENNIS O'KEEFE
MARY MEADE · ALFRED RYDER · WALLY FORD
JUNE LOCKHART · CHARLES McGRAW
Produced by AUBREY SCHENCK · Directed by ANTHONY MANN
EAGLE LION FILMS

Director Anthony Mann and cinematographer John Alton collaborated on *T-Men*, a near perfect representation of the "look" of film noir, the camera floating through baroque compositions of shadows and light shaped by industrial confines like warehouses, boats, dark alleys, fire escapes, and city streets. Alton's camera shoots from high angles, low angles, and deep focus, incorporating several of his iconic "underneath" angles



Realism Painted with Darkness: *T-Men* and the Docu-noir Aesthetic of Anthony Mann and John Alton

Anthony Mann's *T-Men* (1947) is a significant entry in the classic American film noir cycle and, arguably, the best of the subcycle of "docu-noirs" that was released by Hollywood in the wake of the financial success of Twentieth Century-Fox's wartime espionage thriller *The House on 92nd Street* (Henry Hathaway, 1945). tapped into a post-World War II American desire for a greater level of cinematic realism within Hollywood crime melodrama. *T-Men* achieved this semblance of realism through the then-innovative (by classical Hollywood standards) on-location filming in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C.; a newsreel-style voiceover; and a (excellent) cast



John Alton, Cinematographer

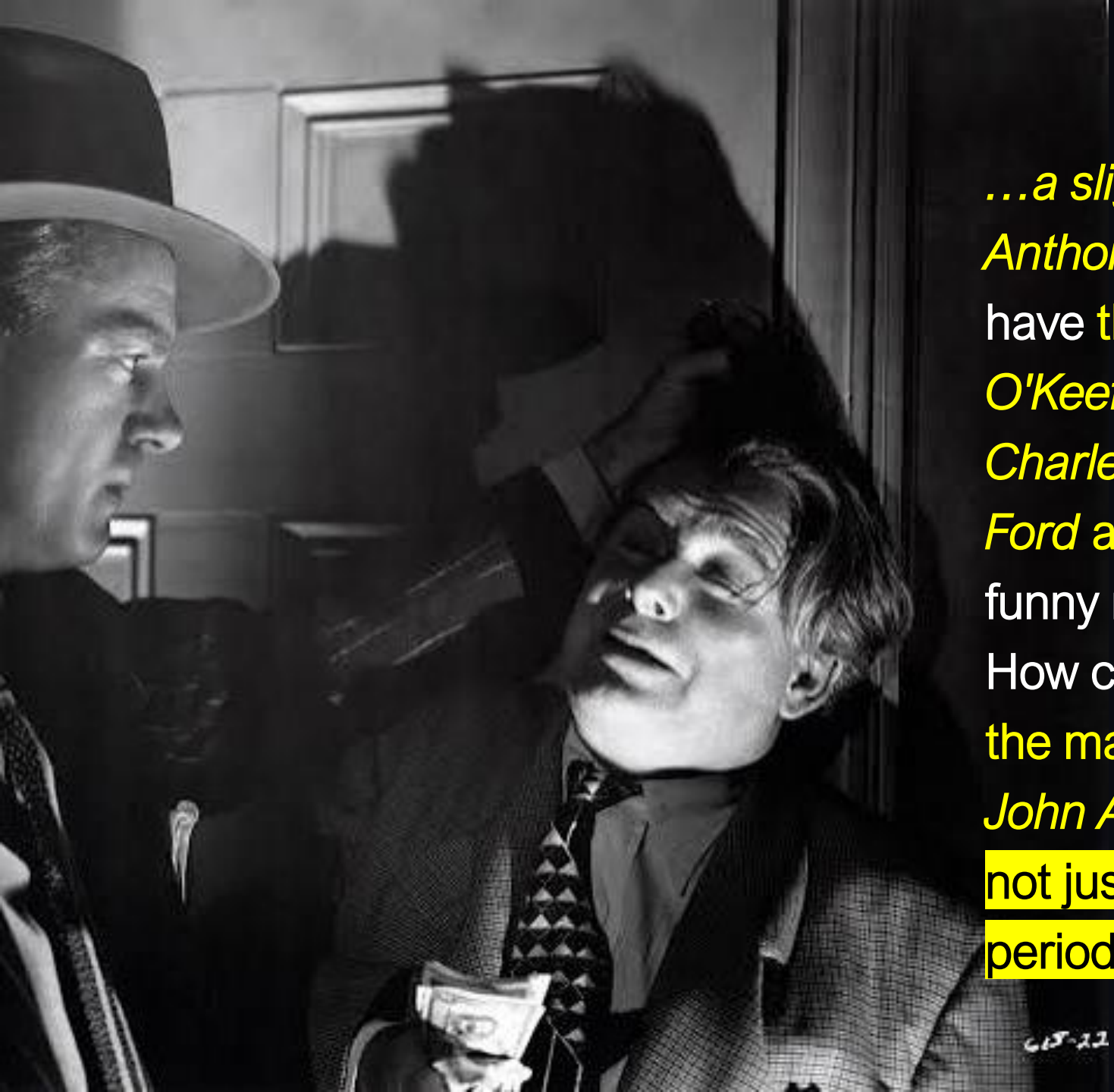
"I used light for mood. All my pictures looked different. That's what made my name, that's what set me apart. People asked for me. I gambled. In most cases, the studios objected. They had the idea that the audience should be able to see everything. But when I started making dark pictures, the audience saw there was a purpose to it."



The noir cinematography in *T-Men* serves two vital purposes:

Not only does it convey the dark psychological metamorphosis of undercover treasury agents Dennis O'Brien (O'Keefe) and Anthony Genaro (Alfred Ryder) as they are devoured by their savage new identities as gangsters Vannie Harrigan and Tony Galvani,

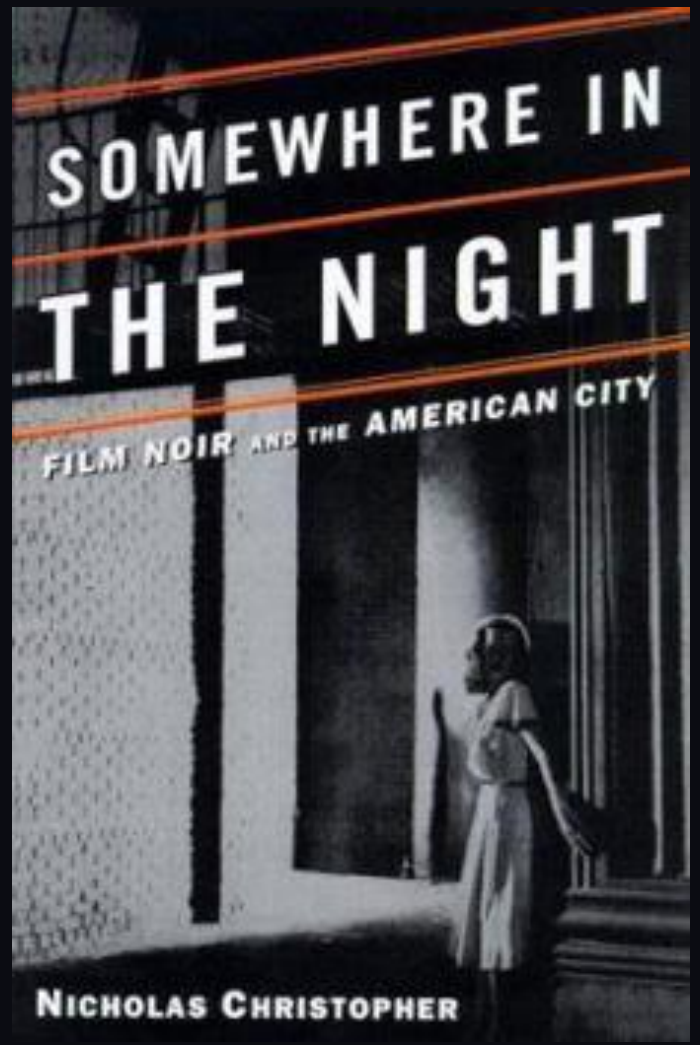
but also this aesthetic undermines the semi-documentary, police procedural elements to suggest that the civil order of postwar American society is a hollow façade.



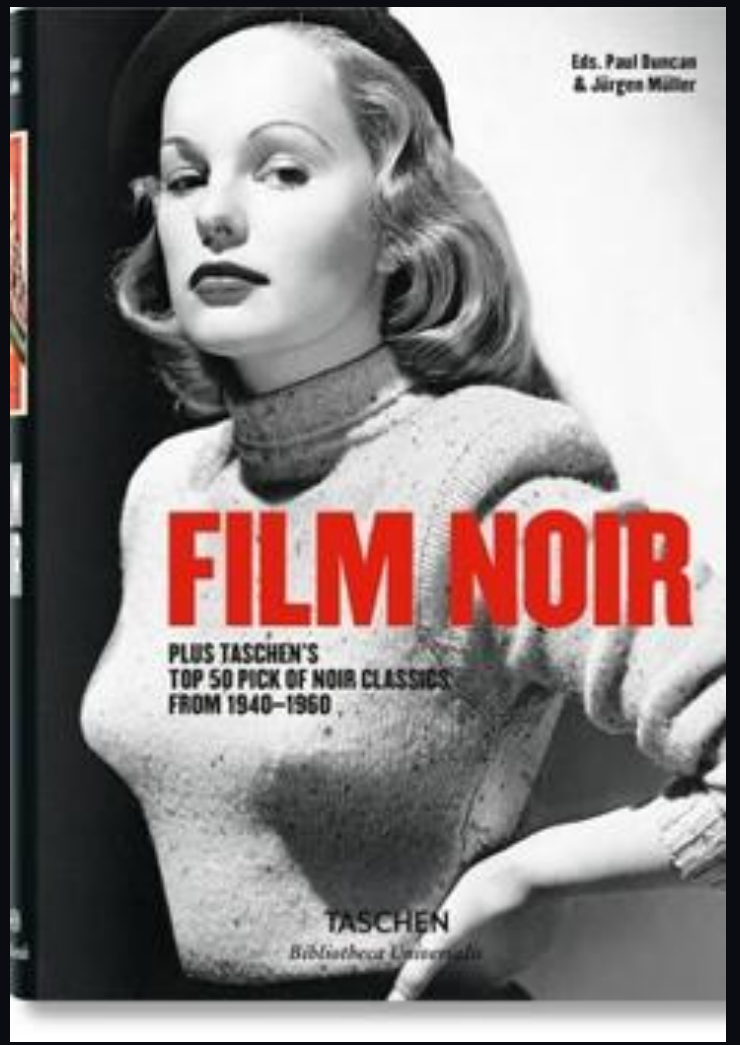
The World Of Noir

…a slight masterpiece this film noir by Anthony Mann called T-Men (1947). You have the ultimate film-noir 'mug' in *Dennis O'Keefe*, one of the great tough guys in *Charles McGraw*, and the always good *Wally Ford* as 'The Schemer'. They're putting out funny money and the Feds are onto them. How can you go wrong, then you consider the master class cinematography of one *John Alton* and what you get is a must-see, not just for film noir buffs, but for film lovers, period.

Here (in T-Men) John Alton, undoubtedly film noir's greatest cinematographer, and, perhaps, the finest black and white cinnmatographer in the history of Amrican film first used an effect that he was to perfect seven years later in The Big Combo. One of the main characters is murdered by a hit man "in one of the most grotesquely balletic and stylized scenes in all of film noir"; the bullets are "seen" as comet-like streaks, splintering into light, against the steamy darkness…



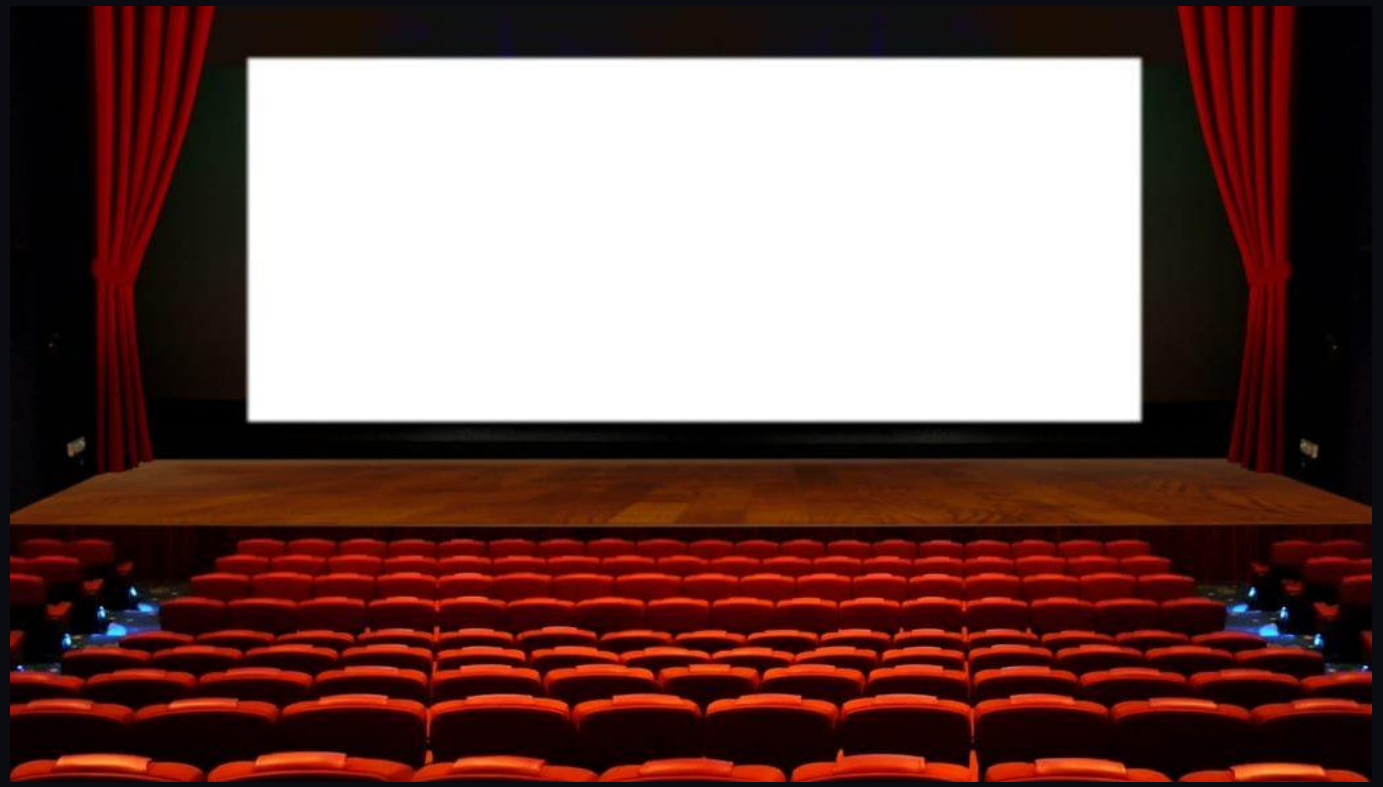
What obviously interested Mann (the Director) in this project is the same thing that dominated so many of his films. Not its basis in reality but the psychology of its main character (played by Dennis O'Keefe). One of Mann's main themes has always been suffering and violence. His main characters endure torturous conditions and do it almost poetically, reinforced by the exquisitely claustrophobic photography he favors, particularly in his noir films. Even more tension is created in the film, as documentary "realism" and expressionistic symbolism clash within the first ten minutes.



BEFORE THE MOVIE



After the Movie





- And Next Week



