



The Asphalt Jungle: A Screenplay (Screenplay Library)

Ben Maddow, John Huston

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Dore Schary, then head of production at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, bought *The Asphalt Jungle* while it was still in manuscript in an effort to match the success Warner Brothers had enjoyed with Burnett's *Little Caesar* and *High Sierra*. The choice of Ben Maddow and John Huston as screenwriters assured the artistic success of the screenplay, for few writer/directors could have matched Huston's ability to develop these characters cinematically.

It was a case of strength building upon strength. Burnett's fully developed characters were transformed by Maddow and Huston into a screenplay of impressive immediacy. Indeed the portrayal of the criminals in splendid performances from Louis Calhern, Sam Jaffe, Sterling Hayden, James Whitmore, and Jean Hagen, led Bosley Crowther to lament, "If only it all weren't so corrupt!" But the characters of Burnett, Maddow and Huston, don't permit us to romanticize about them or their activities. We share their professional pride in a robbery well planned and are silent accomplices to their mutual treachery.

The Asphalt Jungle was nominated for best screenplay by the Motion Picture Academy and for best-written American drama by the Writers Guild. John Huston received a nomination for best director by the Academy. As a novel, *The Asphalt Jungle* has been translated into twelve languages.



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