

# *Film Gris: Crime, Critique and Cold War Culture in 1951*

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One widespread perception holds that after the October 1947 Hollywood Ten trials—particularly after the studio heads pledged in their November 25 Waldorf Statement that they would “not knowingly employ Communists or other subversives”—socially critical filmmaking immediately halted in Hollywood.<sup>1</sup> That perception, however, is a misperception. In 1985 Thom Anderson suggested that some of the most significant cinematic achievements of the filmmakers blacklisted in the late 1940s and early 1950s were released between the Hollywood Ten hearings of October 1947 and the resumption of HUAC investigations of Hollywood in early 1951. In his essay Anderson specifically names directors Abraham Polonsky, Joseph Losey, John Berry, Robert Rossen, Jules Dassin, and Cyril Endfield, along with “their artistic fellow travelers”—that group includes, I believe, such figures as directors John Huston and Nicholas Ray, screenwriters Dalton Trumbo and Hugo Butler, actor John Garfield, and producer Bob Roberts, among others. According to Anderson, this group of six directors—most of them either blacklisted or living under a cloud that would soon lead to blacklisting and/or exile—created a small group of films characterized by a combination of crime and social critique, which he labeled “*film gris*”—gray films. Distinguishing these films from the contemporaneous *film noir*, Anderson wrote that *film gris* was characterized by “its

greater psychological and social realism” than *film noir* (183).

Anderson suggests that the genre includes at least thirteen films:

FILM	DIRECTOR	RELEASE
<i>Body and Soul</i>	Abraham Polonsky	1947
<i>Force of Evil</i>	Abraham Polonsky	1948
<i>Thieves' Highway</i>	Jules Dassin	1949
<i>Night and the City</i>	Jules Dassin	1950
<i>They Live by Night</i>	Nicholas Ray	1949
<i>Knock on Any Door</i>	Nicholas Ray	1949
<i>We Were Strangers</i>	John Huston	1949
<i>The Asphalt Jungle</i>	John Huston	1950
<i>Breaking Point</i>	Michael Curtiz	1950
<i>Lawless</i>	Joseph Losey	1950
<i>Try and Get Me</i>	Cy Endfield	1951
<i>The Prowler</i>	Joseph Losey	1951
<i>He Ran All the Way</i>	John Berry	1951

Some of the films on this list—like *Force of Evil* and *The Asphalt Jungle*—are fairly well known. Others, however, have registered barely a blip on the radar screen of film history. They are interesting as a group, however, because most are made by filmmakers who matured and became politically engaged in left politics during the depression of the 1930s—products of what Michael Denning (1996) has called “the cultural front”<sup>2</sup>—yet got their first opportunity to direct feature films during or after World War II. In their films directed after 1946, as the Cold War began to set in, viewers are given a unique opportunity to see how such engaged filmmakers were seeking to ply their craft in Hollywood during an era increasingly hostile to both their politics and their conceptions of what popular cinema should do.

This essay, then, is an exercise partly in recovery and partly in exploration. I would like to consider the notion of *film gris*—social realist crime films—by examining two of the least well-known films on the list, both released in 1951: Joseph Losey’s *The Prowler* and John Berry’s *He Ran All the Way*.<sup>3</sup> Besides being made by directors who would become exile filmmakers following the release of the films rather than testifying and naming names before HUAC, the films are notable because blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo was the central (if uncredited) author of both screenplays, and *He Ran All the Way*

featured John Garfield's final screen appearance. Each director also believes the film is his best American work.<sup>4</sup> In this essay I focus first on contextual concerns, particularly on the backgrounds and political engagements of these four key creative personnel and of the shifts in the film industry and American culture that made it possible, albeit difficult, for them to make the films they wanted. I then look more closely at each film, delineating the vision of American society rendered through their narratives and cinematic style. Finally, I move to a brief discussion of what happened to the films and their filmmakers after the release of the movies, concluding with a coda on what these two exemplary films suggest about the relationship between *film gris* and *film noir*.

### **The Political Roots of *Film Gris*: Losey, Berry, Garfield, and Trumbo**

Stated simply, *film gris* is a strange brew concocted when the flavor of leftist filmmakers whose politics were formed in the 1930s mixed with the industrial context of Hollywood and the political currents of American culture as the Cold War set in during the late 1940s and early 1950s. Besides Anderson, a number of scholars, including Larry Ceplair and Steven Englund, Paul Buhle and David Wagner, and Brian Neve, have begun to explore the terrain of this generation of filmmakers. Anderson suggests that *film gris* is indebted not solely to directors but also to other workers in the production process, particularly writers and performers (124), and *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* support his contention. I would like to focus particularly on four creative figures involved in these films: the directors, Joseph Losey and John Berry, actor John Garfield, and screenwriter Dalton Trumbo.<sup>5</sup>

As with a number of other directors—Orson Welles, Cyrus Endfield, and Elia Kazan come to mind—Losey and Berry came to Hollywood after some involvement in leftist theater in New York during the depression. Losey (1909-1984), who grew up with Midwestern Episcopalian roots (LaCrosse, Wisconsin) and an economically secure background, received an elite education at Dartmouth (1925-29). He broke his back in a freak accident in his senior year, spending a year in the hospital. His reading and thinking during that period led him to change his major from medical studies to theater and English literature, and after graduating, he completed a master's degree in English at Harvard in 1930. Living in New York through the 1930s, he began as a theatre reviewer, then was a stage manager, and finally directed plays,

working with writers like Sinclair Lewis and Maxwell Anderson. Traveling to the Soviet Union in 1935, he met Russian theater director Vsevolod Meyerhold and directed an English-language version of Clifford Odet's *Waiting for Lefty* in Moscow.<sup>6</sup> On his return, his political and aesthetic interests led him to such groups as the Living Newspaper productions of the Federal Theater Project (Palmer and Riley 3-6, Ciment 405-09). During World War II he worked for United War Relief, a year in radio for NBC, and a period at the end of the war making films for the Signal Corps. A short film he directed for MGM in 1945, *A Gun in His Hand*, received an Oscar nomination, and he directed his first feature film, *The Boy with Green Hair* (1948), for RKO Studios (Palmer 4-5).

Berry (1917-1999), less well known than Losey and eight years his junior, was born Jack Szold in the Bronx to Rumanian and Polish Jewish immigrant parents. Berry's father, born a peasant, worked his way up to become the owner of a successful restaurant after he immigrated to the United States; Berry characterized his father as "petit bourgeois" and himself as a "tough street kid" when he was growing up (TC, 60, 63). Early interested in performance, Berry worked in the Catskills for three years as an MC, dramatic actor, and stand-up comic. In the mid-1930s, he also got to know members of the Group Theater (though he did not work there) and got his first break as an extra and apprentice on Orson Welles' modern-dress theatrical version of *Julius Caesar*, which fashioned an analogy between the play's political themes and contemporary fascism. Radicalized by the Spanish Civil War and a sense that the hunger many Americans were experiencing in the era needed to be eliminated, Berry continued in the theater and worked with Welles on a 1941 stage version of Richard Wright's *Native Son*. Moving to Hollywood during the war, Berry directed his first film, *Miss Susie Slagle's*, starring Lillian Gish, in 1945-6. Several more feature films followed, interspersed with some directing in the Actors Lab in Hollywood. Shortly before his last American feature film, *He Ran All the Way*, he directed a short documentary on the Hollywood Ten (TC, 56-71).<sup>7</sup>

Anderson calls John Garfield "the first axiom of *film gris*," an actor who embodied in his screen persona "a group that had never before appeared in American films, the Jewish working class" (184). Garfield (1913-1952), born Jacob Julius Garfinkle, was a New York "city boy," the son of a Jewish clothes presser and his wife, both first-

generation immigrants. Julie, as he became known to friends, grew up on the Lower East Side, and then, following his mother's death when he was seven, in various spots with a variety of relatives in Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx (Sklar 6; Swindell, chs. 1-2). A rebel as a teen, Garfield became an apprentice actor whose social vision was shaped principally by the Stock Market Crash and the onset of the depression. He began playing small roles in the theater, often in socially engaged work like Elmer Rice's *Counselor-at-Law*, even before he turned 20, getting his first significant reviews for his performance as the uncorrupted romantic son Ralph in the Group Theater's 1935 production of Odets' *Awake and Sing*, directed by Harold Clurman. After getting passed over for the lead in Odets' *Golden Boy*—he was assigned a minor role even though Odets had written the Joe Bonaparte lead for him—Garfield jumped at the chance to sign a contract with Warner Bros. in 1938. From the start he made an impression, earning an Oscar nomination for best supporting actor in his first screen role, Mickey Borden in *Four Daughters*, directed by Michael Curtiz (Sklar 82-3). He had a successful career at Warner Bros. but became even more famous after the war with his roles in Elia Kazan's social problem film about anti-Semitism, *Gentleman's Agreement* (1947), and two leftist films made by Roberts Productions for Enterprise Studios: *Body and Soul* (1947) and *Force of Evil* (1948), both scripted and the latter directed by Abraham Polonsky.<sup>8</sup> Although Garfield was not as active politically as many other Hollywood figures, he considered himself a liberal, frequently signed petitions, and, more specifically, was active with John Huston and others in the Committee for the First Amendment, formed to defend the civil liberties of the Hollywood Ten and to criticize HUAC's assault on Hollywood in 1947. As the Cold War intensified, however, Garfield's name began to be linked with "subversive organizations," and on March 6, 1951—some months before *He Ran All the Way* (his 31st film) was released—he received a subpoena to testify before HUAC during the second wave of its Hollywood investigations.<sup>9</sup> Testifying willingly in April, he presented himself as a liberal who abhorred Communism and who knew no Communists. Because he named no names, he left some HUAC members dissatisfied, yet he also angered some on the left, who felt his testimony too cowering. Abraham Polonsky concisely sketched the arc of Garfield's career when he wrote that "the Group trained him, the movies made him, the blacklist killed him" (8).

Screenwriter Dalton Trumbo was the oldest of this group, born in 1905 in Montrose, Colorado, the son of a man who was a store clerk for most of Trumbo's childhood. The family moved to Grand Junction, Colorado, in 1908 (Hanson 12). Trumbo attended the University of Colorado for a year, but when his father lost his job and moved the family to California, Trumbo put his educational plans on hold and in 1925 took a job at the Davis Perfection Bakery. What was planned as a temporary position stretched into eight years that Trumbo often described as the bleakest in his life (Hanson 13). Yet this experience also, according to Trumbo biographer Bruce Cook, played a key role in shaping Trumbo's social views: "He began to split the world in two: them and us. On the other side were 'the bosses,' whom he soon grew to hate; and on his side were the boys in the bakery" (Cook 53). Trumbo also kept writing during this period, and in 1932 *Vanity Fair* bought a piece on bootlegging from him. This allowed Trumbo to move into free-lance writing, where he found some success with his fiction, then a year as an editor, writer, and critic for *The Hollywood Spectator*, and finally as a screenwriter.

Trumbo signed a contract with Warner Bros. in 1935, moved on to Columbia after coming into conflict with Warner Bros. about his involvement in the Screen Writers Guild, and enjoyed considerable success as a screenwriter in the later 1930s and World War II, getting sole credit for, among others, *A Guy Named Joe*, *Tender Comrade* (both 1943), and *Thirty Seconds Over Tokyo* (1944). Active in the Hollywood left during and after the war, Trumbo joined the Communist Party in 1943 and was one of a group of Warner Bros. employees who telegraphed Jack Warner in protest of the "outrageous violence perpetrated by hired thugs and police" at the studio during the labor dispute of October 1945 (Cook 146-47; Neve 107). In 1947 he was subpoenaed to testify before HUAC and subsequently became one of the Hollywood Ten, the group of leftists that defied HUAC, were cited for contempt of Congress, sentenced to a year in prison, and blacklisted by the studio heads from working in Hollywood. Trumbo's screenplay work for both *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* was uncredited. He was preparing to leave to serve his prison term when he completed work on both scripts, and both films offer examples of how Trumbo's screenplays from 1947 on, according to his biographer Peter Hanson, trade the "sunniness" of many of his earlier screen credits for a darker vision of American society (96-97). Trumbo had very personal auto-

biographical reasons to contribute to *film gris*.

Losey, Berry, and Garfield, then, all had roots in the socially engaged theater of New York during the depression years, the period in which each became politically drawn to left politics and aesthetically convinced that art should not be divorced from but rather should engage with social issues. Losey and Berry also each gained experience as theater directors before coming to Hollywood and moved toward their dreams of becoming film directors either during or shortly after World War Two, while Garfield went from actor in the leftist New York theater to actor in Hollywood. Trumbo, on the other hand, was both a writer and, by force of economic circumstance, a working-class baker who then moved into screenwriting, also getting involved in left politics in Hollywood.

However, these filmmakers would learn that left filmmaking could ruffle powerful feathers: *film gris* generally, and *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* in particular, are interesting in no small part because they were made when the political climate was becoming increasingly hostile to leftists in the United States. Churchill's famous "Iron Curtain" speech about the separation of the East from the West was delivered in Fulton, Missouri, in 1946 after the Soviet Union had expanded its sphere of influence into Eastern Europe. The following year President Harry Truman, responding to national anxieties about spies in government, instituted government loyalty oaths. The period from November 1947 to the spring of 1951—from the Waldorf Statement to the resumption of HUAC subpoenas and hearings—was clearly an anxious time for liberals and other leftists. During that period loyalty oaths became more widespread; the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb; Mao Tse Tung's Communist forces gained control in China; Joseph McCarthy appeared on the scene, warning of subversives in the State Department, and the Korean War broke out. HUAC subpoenas for the second wave of investigations began to be sent out in March of 1951, and the blacklist began to widen considerably thereafter.

Yet in this early Cold War period of increasing hostility, leftists made a number of darkly fascinating ruminations on Hollywood and/or American culture. I noted above that common sense would suggest that left-leaning filmmakers interested in making politically engaged work would have had an impossible time finding work after the October 1947 Hollywood Ten trials, but Paul Buhle and Dave Wagner have recently argued in their biography of Abraham Polonsky that for left

screenwriters, at least, “the forties were the golden years, nearly up to the time of the blacklist. A considerable majority of film credits by later victims of the blacklist,” they write, “date to that decade and, for the obscure or the lucky, to the first year or two of the 1950s” (82). The movies of *film gris* support this contention.

How could this be so? Put simply, although broad trends in national politics of the era discouraged their efforts, some economic factors within the film industry made it possible for some left filmmakers to pursue their work, at least into 1951. A key factor was the growing move toward independent production companies in Hollywood immediately after World War II. Thomas Schatz has recently noted that “during the immediate postwar period, independents enjoyed tremendous success. Never had industry conditions been better suited to their interests, and never had so many filmmakers sought commercial and creative autonomy” (343). In fact, *Variety* reported at the end of 1947 that Hollywood initiated more independent productions that year than any other year in movie history, even though changes in tax laws, often poor box-office performance, and the generally declining audience in the late 1940s caused difficulties for some independent producers in the late 1940s.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the political climate, then, most makers of *film gris* took advantage of the greater artistic freedom of independent production to make their films until the second wave of HUAC investigations began to close off that chapter in American film history from mid-1951 on. Both *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* are typical in this regard. Both were independent productions, but, because declining movie attendance and reduced studio production were freeing up Hollywood studio professionals, both engaged excellent craftsmen to work on the films. *The Prowler* was an Eagle-Horizon Production with Sam Spiegel and John Housman co-producers. According to Losey, Spiegel, using the name S. P. Eagle at the time, “went out of his way to get the best possible technicians in every department” for the film” (Ciment 98-99).<sup>11</sup> The cinematographer was Arthur Miller, a long-time 20th-Century Fox cameraman who had been nominated for a pile of Oscars and won for *How Green Was My Valley* (1941—beating out Gregg Toland and *Citizen Kane!*), *The Song of Bernadette* (1943), and *Anna and the King of Siam* (1946). The editor, Paul Weatherwax, had won an Oscar for *The Naked City* in 1948, and the assistant director was Robert Aldrich, who had the same role in Polonsky’s *Force of Evil* and would



go on to a distinguished directing career of his own. Finally, Art Director Boris Leven had earned Oscar nominations as early as *Alexander's Ragtime Band* (1938) and as late as *The Andromeda Strain* (1967). Along the way, he had done *Giant* and *The Sound of Music* and had won for *West Side Story*.

Talented collaborators also contributed to *He Ran All the Way*. Famed cinematographer James Wong Howe shot the film. Over his career he earned Oscar nominations for a number of films, including *Abe Lincoln in Illinois*, *King's Row*, *North Star*, *The Rose Tattoo* (winning), *The Old Man and the Sea*, *Hud* (winning), and John Frankenheimer's visually striking *Seconds*. Production designer was Harry Horner, who had shared an Oscar for *The Heiress* in 1949 and won again in 1961 for his work on Robert Rossen's *The Hustler*. Veteran Franz Waxman did the score in the midst of his most successful period, when he earned Oscars for *Sunset Boulevard* (1950) and *A Place in the Sun* (1951).

Finally, an uncredited Dalton Trumbo—blacklisted and awaiting departure to serve his contempt of Congress prison term as a member of the Hollywood Ten—was centrally involved in scripting both films. Hugo Butler and Guy Endore are the credited screenwriters from a story by Robert Thoeren and Hans Wilhelm, but Losey recalled in an interview that the story was “pretty awful,” and Trumbo did the first draft screenplay with Butler and Losey making later contributions (Ciment 103). Butler's widow, Jean Rouveral Butler, also stressed Trumbo's role when she told Paul Buhle and David Wagner that initially the screenplay “was written by Trumbo. Hugo went on the project to cover for Trumbo, so there would be a writer on the set. He did make contributions. But it was really much more Trumbo than him” (TC, 165). Trumbo was also key in *He Ran All the Way*. Hugo Butler (again) and Guy Endore are the credited writers. According to John Berry, however, Trumbo did the original script, based on the Sam Ross novel, after which Berry and Jack Moss did another draft that, by Berry's admission, made “some romantic piece of shit out of it.” Berry then called in Butler, who “fixed our script by going back to Dalton's, although Hugo got the credit” (TC, 73).

With *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way*, then, we have films two independently produced films directed by leftist directors with roots in the New York leftist theater, scripted by Dalton Trumbo with help from his friend Hugo Butler, supported by talented Hollywood profes-

sionals, shot in the latter half of 1950, and released in 1951, the same year each director went into exile, and the year before John Garfield died of a heart attack after testifying before HUAC.

### **American Tragedies: Form and Ideology in *Film Gris***

*The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* employ crime film narratives and effective use of cinematic style to convey similar emotional tones and ideological perspectives. Unlike some *film noirs*, both films contain seeds of social critique. Losey himself considered *The Prowler* a film about materialism and corruption in American life, telling Michel Ciment that the films he made the U.S. during this period were “message pictures”—social problem films that suited so many leftist filmmakers in the late 1940s (97, 100). And although Robert Sklar calls *He Ran All the Way* a “film in retreat” (231), notably non-subversive when compared to earlier Garfield films like *Body and Soul* and *Force of Evil*, it, too, contains a critical edge. In fact, M. Keith Booker believes that Garfield’s character in the film functions as “an allegorical representative of the alienated capitalist subject, making *He Ran All the Way* an even more direct criticism of capitalism than most films of its genre” (176-77). Both films center on an isolated lower-middle- or working-class male who yearns for more money, love, and status in American life and commits a crime in hopes of achieving at least some of those dreams. Along the way, he becomes involved with a woman who is alternately attracted to and repelled by him. Although each film exhibits moments of hope for the central characters, the dominant emotions generated by the narratives are suspense as authorities pursue the protagonists following the crime and an ultimate sense that their fates are hopeless. Both films express pessimism about the American dream, a perception that the tension between the promises of materialism and the realities of economic inequality results in American tragedies for the working-class protagonists.<sup>12</sup>

The central characters of *The Prowler* are Webb Garwood (Van Heflin), a Los Angeles policeman, and housewife Susan Gilvray (Evelyn Keyes). In the opening scene of the film, Susan calls a police emergency number one evening after she discovers a prowler outside her bathroom window. Garwood and his older partner, Bud Crocker (John Maxwell), respond to the call, and Garwood—attracted by Susan—stops by alone later that evening, ostensibly to see if she is all right. He is lonely and frustrated by the low status and pay of his job; she is

frustrated because she yearns for a family but discovered after marrying that her middle-aged husband is impotent. They strike up a relationship—Susan's husband does a late-night radio program that ends at 4 a.m.—and after a time Webb suggests that Susan divorce and marry him. Although attracted, Susan rejects the offer, and Webb insists that they not see one another. A couple of weeks pass, and Webb concocts a plan whereby he answers a prowler call at the Gilvray house, shoots and kills the gun-wielding husband when he comes outside, then uses the husband's pistol to shoot himself in the arm. In the ensuing trial, he is acquitted of accidental homicide, after he testifies (and Susan, conflicted, confirms under oath) that they do not know one another.

Webb then ingratiates himself with Susan's brother-in-law, claiming guilty feelings about the death and a desire to help Susan financially if she needs it. The brother-in-law, moved by the gesture, suggests a meeting. Although Susan initially rebuffs Webb, he calculatingly convinces her that the death was an accident, and within a few months, they marry and use Gilvray's insurance money to buy a motel. Upon arrival at the motel, however, Susan announces to Webb that she is four months pregnant. Webb says that, given Susan's deceased husband's impotence, the birth date cannot be made known or their lies about not knowing one another will implicate them in murder. They decide to move to Calico, an abandoned mining town that Bud, an amateur geologist, had told Webb about, hoping to deliver the baby with no medical help. Shortly before childbirth, however, complications arise, and Webb drives his new Cadillac to summon a doctor, taking a handgun along despite Susan's protests. The doctor becomes suspicious, and after the childbirth, at Susan's request, takes the baby and drives off to alert the police, stealing Webb's car keys to prevent his pursuit. After Susan—learning for the first time that Webb had known prior to the shooting the exact amount of her husband's life insurance policy—denounces him as a calculating thief, liar, and murderer, Webb finds Susan's keys and tries to escape. But with the road blocked and the police in close pursuit, Webb abandons his car and tries to escape over a steep hill of loose gravel. After he ignores orders to halt and continues, Sisyphus-like, to slide back while trying to scale the peak, one of the policemen shoots and kills Webb. The end.

Losey uses Boris Leven's sets and character development skillfully to set up the central class conflict in the film. Susan and her husband live in a spacious Spanish-style house that impresses both Bud

and Webb when they make their first call.<sup>13</sup> Later in the film, we see that Webb, who hates being a cop, lives in a single hotel room, sparsely furnished with a bed, dresser, and not much else.<sup>14</sup> The contrast is striking. From there, the narrative moves briefly to the small one-bedroom motel apartment, then to the rough-hewn and wind-blown setting in the abandoned mining town. The spiral, for Susan, is consistently downward.

Despite the contrast between the living quarters and social class of the two central characters at the start of the film, Susan is drawn to Webb when she learns that they are both displaced Midwesterners from the same part of Indiana—Terre Haute—and more crucially, that they are both lonely and dissatisfied with their lives. Although she grew up on the right side of the tracks, Susan failed in her attempt to become a Hollywood actress, then married for security and a family; her husband's impotence intensifies her frustration. Webb, a high school basketball star who squandered his college basketball scholarship because he would not follow his coach's directions and be a team player, thinks his job is beneath him and dreams of owning a motel so that, as he puts it, even when he is sleeping he is making money. He laments to Susan that had he not clashed with the coach, he would be selling bonds and eating lunch at the University Club, and his only problem would be in deciding which of his cars to drive to work. He begins to hatch his plot when, on one of his first visits to Susan, he sneaks a look at her husband's \$62,000 life insurance policy.



Figure 1: Webb Garwood (Van Heflin) makes advances on an ambivalent Susan Gilvray (Evelyn Keyes)

Camera and acting style combine to depict Webb's manipulations and Susan's ambivalence about her relationship with him. The film has been compared to *Double Indemnity*, but despite surface similarities, Susan is not portrayed as the femme fatale here, like Phyllis Dietrichson. Rather, she is a victim of Webb's charming but calculating treachery.<sup>15</sup> A number of times in the film, Losey uses two-shots of Susan and Webb in which she wavers when he makes advances (see Figure 1). And if viewers might feel some compassion for him when he describes the tough upbringing and bad luck he has endured, that compassion dissolves for an attentive viewer in three scenes: in the first, Webb "breaks up" with Susan in his apartment after she refuses to visit him in Las Vegas during his vacation. As she leaves the room in disappointment, Losey cuts to a bird's-eye shot long shot above Webb's bed: he jumps into the frame on the bed, laughs a knowing laugh, and shoots a balled-up sheet of paper, basketball-like, into the hanging light fixture above his bed. Second, the murder scene makes it clear that Webb has engineered Gilvray's death to make him look innocent. Then, in the reconciliation scene at Susan's house after the trial, Webb looks directly into Susan's eyes in a medium shot and lies that he did not murder Gilvray, a scene that would find echoes two decades later when Michael Corleone similarly lies to his wife Kay in the final scene of *The Godfather*.

Losey told Michel Ciment that *The Prowler* is "a film about false values. About the means justifying the end. . . . '100,000 bucks, a Cadillac, and a blonde' were the sine qua non of American life at that time, and it didn't matter how you got them" (100). The film's ideology is expressed implicitly through the actions of Webb in particular, but it emerges most explicitly in the final scene, when Susan attacks Webb after finally learning that Webb knew about Gilvray's life insurance policy even before the murder. Webb admits his murder but defends himself. "So I'm no good," he admits to Susan, but "I'm no worse than anyone else. You work in a store, you knock down on the cash register. A big boss, the income tax. Ward heeler, ya sell votes. Lawyer, take bribes. I was a cop. I used a gun. I'm no different from those other guys. Some do it for a million, some for ten. I did it for \$62,000." Herein lies the thematic core of the film: American life is driven by money, and it is customary for people to seek it, whatever the means. For those who do not have it, the lure is strong to obtain it in corrupt ways. Webb feels he is no different than any other man seeking finan-

cial security and a piece of the American dream. Unfortunately, though, he is doomed to be caught. Several shots in the final scene contain a visual metaphor of Webb's hopeless situation: in them, Webb scrambles up the hill of sand and loose rocks, trying helplessly to evade the cops who relentlessly close in on him. Those final images vividly capture what Manny Farber aptly described as the movie's "taut, dry naturalism" (38).



Figure 2: Nick Robey (Garfield) with the gun, a key motif in *He Ran All the Way*

Although *The Prowler's* narrative covers nearly a year, *He Ran All the Way* develops its suspense in a much tighter time frame: three days, starting on a Friday morning and ending that Sunday night. Garfield plays Nick Robey, a petty criminal still living in a run-down apartment with his badgering and loveless mother (Gladys George). A deep-focus long take—a device used quite frequently in the film—during the opening scene emphasizes Nick's ennui, the deteriorated living quarters (they recall Webb's apartment in *The Prowler*), and three objects when Nick moves toward his dresser to look in the mirror: a fan to circulate air on the hot summer morning, a quart of hard liquor, and a gun (see Figure 2). When Nick moves toward the right and the bathroom, James Wong Howe's camera pans right to follow him, but the gun remains distinct in the near foreground. And indeed, a gun remains a central prop motif right up to the film's final scene.

Following this opening scene, Nick acts as muscle when he and partner Al Molin attempt a payroll robbery in a factory warehouse, despite Nick's bad feeling about the whole enterprise. A security guard

appears just after they steal the money, and in the ensuing chase, Al is killed and Nick escapes with the money, accidentally shooting a policeman who dies shortly thereafter. Recalling Al's advice to walk calmly into a crowd after the heist, Nick goes to a public swimming pool, where he meets Peggy Dobbs (Shelley Winters) and coaxes her to let him take her home in a cab. She invites him into her family's apartment, where he meets her parents (Wallace Ford and Selena Royle) and little brother Tommy (Bobby Hyatt). When they leave, then return from a movie, Nick forces the whole family to let him hide in their apartment, threatening violence if anyone in the family exposes him. On Saturday, he lets Mr. Dobbs and Peggy go to their working-class jobs—he sets print at a newspaper, she works in a bakery—threatening harm to the remaining family members if they divulge his whereabouts. Peggy, however, is attracted to Nick and helps Nick escape. Peggy does, but Nick's mother wants nothing to do with her son. Mr. Dobbs visits Peggy at work and tells her not to come home after work on Saturday.

At dinner that evening, it becomes clear that Nick is curious and drawn to the family life he sees. However, Mr. and Mrs. Dobbs and Tommy refuse to eat the food he has bought until he threatens violence. Against her father's wishes, Peggy returns late that evening wearing a revealing low-cut dress and a new hairdo (a co-worker at the bakery had suggested she do so if she wanted to attract men). Talking alone with Nick, she considers escaping with him to a better life, and he talks her into buying an escape car for them, using some of the stolen money. On Sunday morning, Mrs. Dobbs and Tommy go to church and Peggy leaves to buy the car. Upon her return, Mr. Dobbs is shocked when he learns that she has bought the car—it will be delivered later after a headlight is repaired—and intends to go with Nick. Mr. Dobbs leaves the house and stops his wife and son from returning to the apartment. As the delivery of the car is delayed, however, Nick becomes more unstrung and begins to doubt Peggy's help and commitment. In turn, Peggy begins to see Nick's brutality, much as Susan became suspicious of Webb in *The Prowler*. As Nick leaves the apartment lobby to go to his car, Peggy shoots him. The film's last shot—and Garfield's last moment on screen—portrays the wounded Nick stumbling toward the car, then splashing curbside into draining water and dying. The camera pans up, and Mr. Dobbs puts a father's arm around the shoulder of his stunned daughter, who has just killed the

man she hoped would be her lover.

The characterizations of Nick and Peggy resemble that of the central couple in *The Prowler*. In both films the male is physically attractive, frustrated with a life lacking love and money, and willing to commit a crime to achieve his dreams. Both Susan and Peggy are lonely in their own lives, dreaming of finding a man who will love them and lead them to happier and more fulfilling lives. Although neither is the femme fatale so often found in *film noir*, both exhibit a genuine ambivalence about the male lead, alternating between attraction and repulsion, ending finally with a rejection and repudiation of the male lead, which in turn lead to a break and his inevitable demise.

The performances of Garfield and Shelly Winters are both effective and characterized by gestures and expressions that convey ambivalence. Garfield exudes a variety of emotions: frustration, anger leading to threats of violence, tenderness with Peggy, and even a yearning to be part of a loving family when he observes from outside the supportive interactions of the Dobbs family members—so different from the family life he knew. Winters plays Peggy as a young woman inexperienced with men but seeking a romantic relationship with Nick. Vulnerable to his charm, she is uncertain whether his warm interactions with her are genuine or merely a means to his end of escaping the police. It is no surprise that most contemporary reviews of the film in particular praised the acting of the principal performers.<sup>16</sup>

Several other elements of film style besides acting performance also contribute to the film's concerns. On occasion low-key lighting, generating stark contrast between lit objects and shadows, is used for dramatic purposes, particularly in the night scenes in the apartment on Saturday and Sunday evening. Sound effects, like the police siren that Peggy and Nick hear on Sunday evening after the rest have left the apartment, along with non-diegetic music in key scenes, help to intensify the suspense after Nick goes into hiding. But an especially important stylistic element is camera distance, with two different strategies most dominant. First, particularly in the Dobbs apartment, Berry and cinematographer James Wong Howe employ deep focus long takes, with the actors staged at different distances from the camera. In the opening scene, for example, the long take of Nick in bed in the foreground and his mother badgering him in the background helps to establish the loveless world that has shaped his life. Even more crucial is a take of around 87 seconds shortly before the climax, when Nick and



Peggy, alone in the apartment, are waiting for the car to arrive. The shot begins in a medium closeup of Peggy, who by now is fearful of Nick, her left hand resting on the top of a chair back as she looks to the side of it (see Figure 3). In the background Nick roams the apartment, while Peggy stays stationary for much of the shot. On occasion the camera pans to follow Nick, as when he looks out the window, then pans back to the original framing. When Nick comes closer to Peggy, he looms threateningly over her. As he begins to press her about the car, asking for evidence that she did indeed buy it, Peggy stands and backs away from the camera, moving toward her wallet. Nick follows, back to the camera, and she looks almost like an animal being stalked. When he reaches to grab Peggy, Berry cuts to the next shot. Whereas in earlier long takes, Nick was often set apart from the family, on a different plane, observing and at times yearning to be a part of the group, in this crucial shot he has become accusative and suspicious, ultimately becoming a predator and destroying any trust Peggy may have had for him. Even in the film's final shot, Nick is in the foreground, fallen into the gutter, while Peggy, her father, and other observers look on from the background. The character who yearns for love, a sense of belonging, after being denied it all his life remains, to the end, isolated from everyone—both physically and emotionally.



Figure 3: Deep focus in *He Ran All the Way*: Peggy (Winters) threatened by Nick near the film's climax

A second strategy of camera distance is the focus on Nick's expressions through closeups. The film's first shot begins with a tight framing of Nick's face, and this framing recurs periodically throughout the film at crucial moments, most dramatically in the sequence by the front door of the Dobbs' apartment building, just before Peggy shoots Nick. The pair stands on opposite sides of the door inside the lobby after Mr. Dobbs shoots out a window in the door from across the street. When Nick, having dropped his gun, implores Peggy to pick it up, Berry cuts back and forth between a very tight closeup of Nick (framed from the top of his forehead down) and a slightly looser framing of Peggy. We get five of these tight closeups of Nick as he first beseeches and, by the last closeup, threateningly demands that Peggy pick up the gun (see Figure 4). Immediately after the final closeup, Peggy picks up the gun, and after a moment of suspense not knowing what she will do with it, Nick lurches toward her and she shoots the gun. These closeups of Nick stress that it is really his film, and in conjunction with the deep focus long takes, Berry, Garfield, and Howe convey unforgettably the film's key tension between Nick's human isolation and anger on the one hand and his intense yet ultimately unsuccessful desire to connect to others.



**Figure 4: Howe's tight closeups: Nick demands that Peggy retrieve the fallen gun**

This tension helps define the film's thematic core. The deprivation of love and the desire to be loved, so central to Nick's character, are also linked to lack of money and a sense that love and happiness depend on obtaining money. The first scene establishes that Nick comes from a loveless and poverty-stricken background, and the robbery in the film's second scene is a desperate (and reluctant, carried out only because of Al's prodding) act on Nick's part to get the money that will allow him to lead what he sees as a good life and to share it with someone. On Saturday, in a discussion with Mrs. Dobbs, Nick says the \$10,000 he has stolen will allow him to live in Florida in the winter, the mountains in the summer. And the money, combined with his charm, enables him to attract Peggy in his misguided desire to live the good life. As with Webb Garwood in *The Prowler*, Nick's class status leads him to believe that the only way he can share in the American dream is to pursue it through criminal means. In both films, then, class and crime are inextricably linked with social critique—a hallmark of *film gris*.

When Patrick McGilligan noted to director John Berry that a feeling of doom pervades *He Ran All the Way*, Berry quickly responded, "It's about doom. That's not coincidental" (TC, 50). Given the pressures that blacklisted screenwriter Trumbo, Garfield, and Berry were living under during the historical moment in which the film was being written and shot, it is no wonder the tone of doom is so dominant. The "taut, dry naturalism" that Manny Farber detected in *The Prowler* is equally at work in this, John Berry's final American film before his exile.

### **Release and Aftermath: the End of *Film Gris***

Both *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* were shot in 1950 and had their New York releases within a week of one another in late June and early July 1951. Given the fact that the Korean War was raging, Joseph McCarthy was gaining prominence, and HUAC had resumed its investigations of Hollywood figures, pressuring movie figures—including Garfield—to choose between informing and the blacklist, it was not an ideal time to release such films. How did they do with the critics?

Somewhat surprisingly, given the cultural climate, the films received mixed to good reviews. A.H. Weiler's *New York Times* review called *The Prowler* "a story spun with conviction and mounting force," even though "the chief protagonists garner little sympathy," conclud-

ing that the film is “dignified and often exciting, despite its unsavory theme” (16). *Variety*, the industry’s box-office bellwether, praised Evelyn Keyes’ performance and Losey’s direction in particular, and called the movie “a bawdy, daring story that must be restricted to the adult market, though the situations are handled with deftness” (6). Manny Farber, in his *Nation* review, called Losey a “left-wing naturalist director” who turned out “a neat ‘sleeper’ held down only by its mimics, all less snappy than the models from *Double Indemnity*, *Greed*, and so on”(37, 38). *New Republic*—“The plot is as unlikely as it is sordid”(23)—and *Commonweal*—“thoroughly unsavory people”(286)—were less kind, but *Time* called it a “superior melodrama” that, unlike most melodramas, “makes its principals recognizable human beings . . . who stay consistently within their well-drawn characterizations”(100). None of the reviewers rejected the film on political grounds; wrapped in a suspenseful naturalist tale of crime, it garnered a relatively positive response.

The same could be said of *He Ran All the Way*. Although Manny Farber thought the accents a “puzzling mishmash” of various New York and California dialects, he called the film “an old-fashioned gangster film (no message or Freudian overtones; fairly intense and exciting)” and connected the acting to other movies and plays all the way back to Odets’ *Awake and Sing* (38). Bosley Crowther, lead *New York Times* film reviewer, was ambivalent, criticizing the story’s plausibility but praising Berry’s “driving direction . . . designed to force the punctuation of shock,” as well as Franz Waxman’s score (24). *Variety* called it a “taut gangster pic,” predicted it was “set for good returns,” and praised the sustained suspense and the performances: “Garfield is highly effective as a harshly-raised hoodlum.” The reviewer also (correctly) noted that the “production budget seems limited to insure safe returns” (6). To Robert Hatch, it was “a good picture, an ingenious idea worked out by a skillful cast”(23), while Phillip Hartung thought it “a pretty good thriller,” with the meal scene especially effective (310). *Time* praised the sets, cinematography, and lower-middle-class characterizations, adding that “the script gives the hoodlum some depth as well as menace; he is stupid, confused, worried sick, and for all his bitterness and bullying, wants eagerly to be liked” (90).

As *The Prowler*, *He Ran All the Way*, and Cy Endfield’s *Try and Get Me* played out their runs in the summer of 1951, *film gris* was winding to an end, its practitioners realizing that with the resumption

of HUAC hearings, their days in the American film industry were numbered. Dalton Trumbo, a member of the Hollywood Ten, was already blacklisted when, uncredited, he wrote the screenplays of *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way*, just before he began serving his prison term for contempt of Congress. By the time the films were finally released, Trumbo had already completed his term—he served ten months in a federal prison in Ashland, Kentucky, and was released in April 1951, getting two months off for good behavior. By the time the films were released, he had settled in trying to do underground screenwriting through fronts to support his family.<sup>17</sup>

HUAC had issued a subpoena for Joseph Losey on June 13, but the FBI agent assigned to deliver it went to an old address and never found Losey, who left Los Angeles to shoot a film in Italy on July 15. In September—still in Italy—he refused his lawyer’s advice that he testify before a private session of HUAC. In October, he came back to New York briefly but could find no work; then, shortly after Eisenhower was elected in November, he returned to England for his long and artistically active exile (Caute 106).

John Berry told Patrick McGilligan that *He Ran All The Way* was awaiting release when two men in fedoras and trench coats came to his door with a subpoena to testify before HUAC. His wife answered the bell, “and as soon as she opened the door, I went out the window.” He moved around California for several weeks, dodging the subpoena and hoping that HUAC’s investigations would stop, but when they did not, he left for Paris and spent most of his exile there.<sup>18</sup>

Garfield was already in effect blacklisted by the time *He Ran All the Way* was released. After he testified before HUAC on April 23, 1951, stating that he was a liberal who hated Communism and had never known anyone who was a Communist, thus refusing to name names, the industry refused to clear him. Finding no work in Hollywood, Garfield returned to New York and performed in theatrical revivals of *Peer Gynt* and *Golden Boy*, finally getting the chance to play Joe Bonaparte more than fifteen years after he was first denied the part. Convinced he was blacklisted unless he went back to HUAC, Garfield considered making another confession, even going so far as to draft a statement. But on May 20, 1952, he listened on the radio to the concluding segment of his old friend Clifford Odets’ testimony before HUAC. Odets named a number of names, including an old Group Theater actor, J. Edward Bromberg, who had died the previous

December, shortly after his HUAC testimony. (Odets had delivered the eulogy at Bromberg's funeral.) That night John Garfield died of a massive heart attack (Swindell, 241-66 *passim*).

### **Coda: *Film Gris* and *Film Noir***

With these blacklistings, exiles, and even deaths, the small cinematic movement which Thom Anderson labeled *film gris* ground to a halt: HUAC's second wave of investigations signaled its death knell. Let me conclude by suggesting that *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way* may help us both define *film gris* a bit more concretely than Anderson did in his ground-breaking essay and locate its relationship to *film noir*.

In his wide-ranging and insightful exploration of *film noir*, James Naremore helps illuminate *film gris* when he writes that the family tree of *film noir* splits into two branches: one—the Hitchcock/Wilder branch (one might also add Fritz Lang)—leaning toward “cynicism and misanthropy,” and the other—the Welles/Huston branch—toward “humanism and political engagement” (125). Using Naremore's framework—a broad definition of *film noir*—*film gris* leans more toward the second branch, although its humanism and political engagement were severely tested in the frigid winds of the Cold War.

If we define *film noir* in its broadest sense, as a large set of American crime films made between the early 1940s and the middle 1950s, *film gris* is probably best understood as a subset of *film noir* characterized, as Anderson noted, by a greater focus on social realism than most others in that large group and by its more specific historical boundaries from 1946 to 1951.

However, as Steve Neale has recently pointed out, *film noir* has been notoriously difficult to define, and critics have emphasized different narrative, stylistic, or thematic features when trying to do so (151-156). Some consider *film noir* a genre, others a movement, still others a set of stylistic conventions generating a certain mood or tone, and others a style blended with a distinctive perspective on individuals and society (Krutnik 17). If we consider noir in some of these more specific ways, *film gris* is a related yet separate phenomenon.

For example, *film gris* is a category separate from noir to those who, like Paul Schrader (1996), have defined *film noir* by emphasizing its stylistic features, particularly its low-key lighting, expressive use of shadows, and extreme camera angles. Although both *The Prowler*

and *He Ran All the Way* employ some low-key lighting and variety in camera angles, neither revels in these devices as some noirs do.

Other definitions of noir have emphasized how an unattached and rootless man is victimized by the femme fatale in prototypical noir narratives, seeing in the genre a manifestation of a crisis in masculinity in the years during and after World War II. Following in this vein, Vivian Sobchack has recently noted that “there are hardly any homes” in noir and that the films instead take place during “lounge time” in public urban spaces outside homes—bars, night clubs, cocktail lounges, one-night hotel rooms, diners, roadside cafes, and other seedy locations. Sobchack further argues that these places—and *film noir* in general—threaten the traditional functions and security of the domestic sphere (138, 154-58 passim).<sup>19</sup> This perspective on noir does not help us classify these two films. A home and an apartment are central locations in *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way*: much of first half of *The Prowler* takes place in or around the Gilvray home, while an even larger portion of *He Ran All the Way* is set in the Dobbs family’s apartment. Just as significant, the central working-class male characters are at least intermittently attracted by, and even envious of, the examples of a stable family life that they see in the homes. These films are partly about the inability of Webb and Nick to achieve a sense of belonging that they desire, a quite different concern than many examples of *film noir*, in which men are more likely to feel trapped or victimized by a femme fatale and uninterested in taking up family life. Moreover, like these two films, the destruction of Howard Taylor’s family in *Try and Get Me* and Dix Hadley’s fervent desire to get back to his family farm in *Asphalt Jungle* also suggest that *film gris* is more likely than *film noir* to lament the destruction of or inability to form families and close human ties because of economic pressures on marginal and working-class people in American culture. *Film gris* shows greater social and psychological realism than much of *film noir*, but these films also depict American tragedies of money and how limited opportunity gets in the way of meaningful human connection. As such, their literary roots reside more centrally in the socially conscious naturalism of writers like Dreiser and Richard Wright or in the narrative conventions of 1930s proletarian fiction and drama than the detective crime fiction of Chandler and Hammett.

James Naremore has shrewdly noted that the despairing tone of *The Prowler* and other films of the era “is clearly related to the politics



Figure 5: The final dark (and metaphorical) moments of *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way*

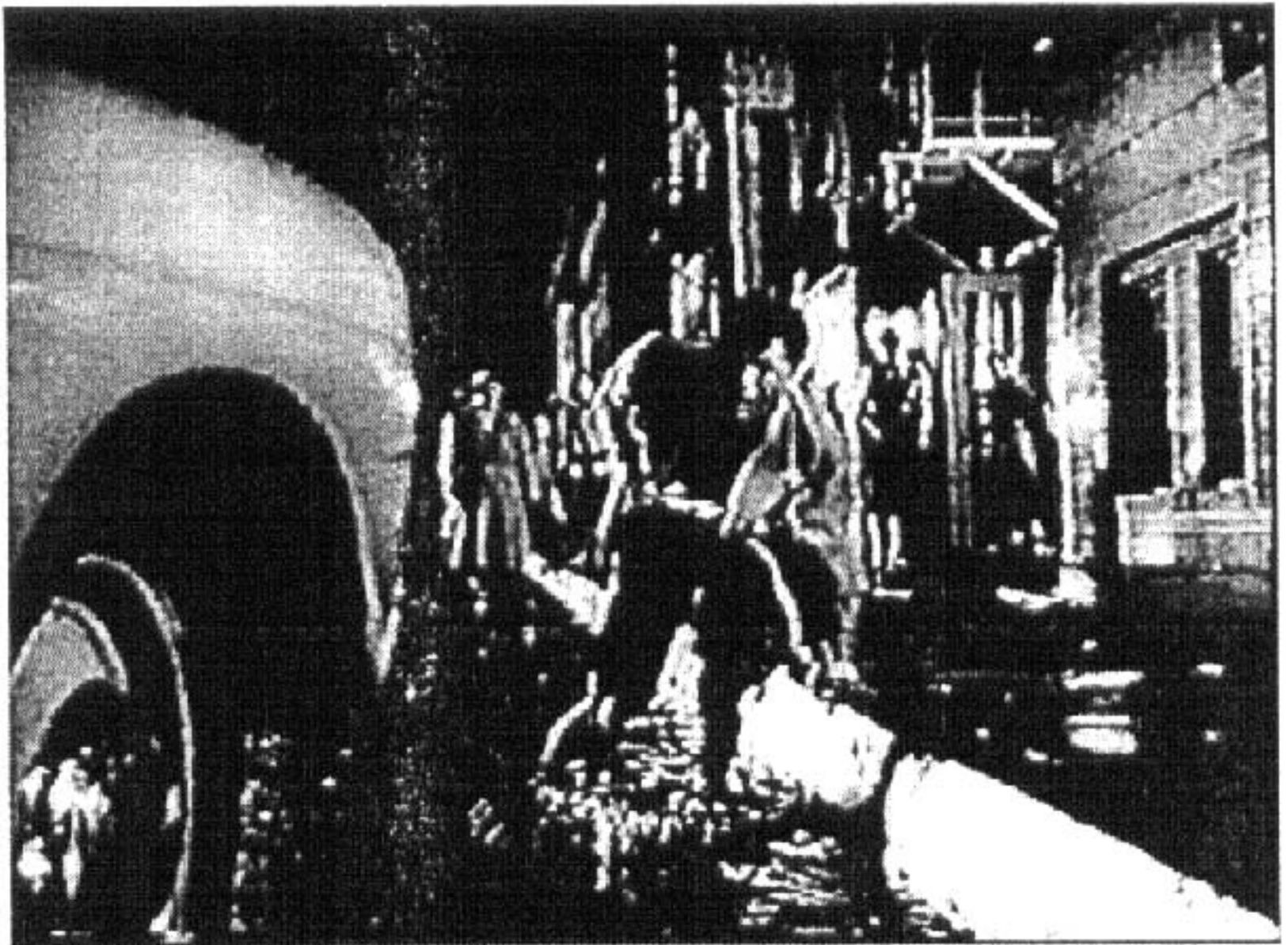


Figure 6: The final dark (and metaphorical) moments of *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way*



and individual circumstances of the individual writers, directors, and stars. . . . The Left in Hollywood was utterly demoralized by Truman, the atomic bomb, and the HUAC investigations” (30). Although some *film gris* conveys more strident and explicit political critiques of American capitalism than *The Prowler* and *He Ran All the Way*—I would point particularly to *Body and Soul*, *Force of Evil*, and *Come and Get Me*—these two Trumbo-scripted films—again, not unlike *Asphalt Jungle*<sup>20</sup>—also develop leftist social critiques. If that critique is more subtle and implicit, the three films still convey a powerful lamentation of what America had become during the most frigid years of the Cold War. In the final images of these films—Dix Hadley dying in a Kentucky field just as he gets back to the horse farm his family lost in the depression, Webb Garwood shot in the back as he fruitlessly tries to scale a hill to escape, and Nick Robey collapsing in the gutter a foot from the car that was supposed to take Peggy and him to freedom—the tone, political critique, and despairing themes of *film gris* are vividly encapsulated (see Figures 5 and 6). As fascinating cultural documents made by leftist filmmakers who were shaped by the depression and trying to work seriously in American film during hostile times, these films deserve more attention than we have given them.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The text of the Waldorf Statement may be found in Larry Ceplair and Stephen Englund, Appendix 6.
- <sup>2</sup> Denning locates the Cultural Front as an outgrowth of the Popular Front, itself rooted in American political and economic conflicts in the mid-1930s.
- <sup>3</sup> Neither film is at present available for purchase in video formats in the United States. I would like to thank Brian Neve for helping me gain access to the films.
- <sup>4</sup> Losey told his biographer, David Cauter, p. 91, that he preferred *The Prowler* to any of his other American films. Berry told interviewer Patrick McGilligan that there was "no question" that it was his best American film and that he also thought *Claudine*, directed in 1974 after the blacklist broke, had "real merit." See "Joseph Berry," in McGilligan and Paul Buhle, 74. Hereafter cited in the text as "TC."
- <sup>5</sup> See Ceplair and Englund; Neve, esp. chs. 3 and 5; and Buhle and Wagner, esp. chs. 2-3.
- <sup>6</sup> Losey also talked in his travels to the German playwright Bertholt Brecht and the Russian director Okhlopov, who had a theater in Moscow. When Michel Ciment asked Losey if his stay in Russia affected his theater work upon his return to the U.S., he replied, "Immensely. I think that some of the talks with Brecht and the Okholpkov and Meyerhold theatres to a large degree opened things up for me enormously. Otherwise, I couldn't have done the *Living Newspaper*." See Ciment, ed., p. 42.
- <sup>7</sup> The Actors Laboratory Theatre (or Actors Lab) was, according to theater historian Wendy Ward, rooted in both the Group Theatre and the Federal Theatre Project, and its executive board included three former Group members. See Ward's *Real Life Drama: The Group Theatre and America, 1931-1940*. McGilligan and Buhle, p. 53, provide a filmography of Berry's credits, primarily as director and screenwriter,

but also as an actor.

<sup>8</sup> Enterprise was established in 1946 as an independent production company hoping to lure stars from the major studios by offering a chance to participate in the profits of the films they made. Roberts Productions was a company co-founded by Garfield and his former business manager, Bob Roberts, after his Warner Bros. contract had expired. Enterprise first released its films through United Artists, then later through M-G-M, and its one major hit of its nine releases between 1947 and 1949 was *Body and Soul*, starring Garfield and written by Polonsky. The film cost \$1.8 million to make and grossed \$4.7 million. On Enterprise, particularly on Polonsky and Garfield's contributions to it, see Neve, pp. 126-36, and Buhle and Wagner, 108-132.

<sup>9</sup>Garfield's name was mentioned with a number of other Hollywood figures in a June 1949 Soviet espionage trial: the reference came from an FBI memo which charged a number of figures with being Communists or supportive of Communists. Nothing, however, immediately happened to Garfield as a result of that reference (Sklar, 216).

<sup>10</sup> *Variety*, 7 January 1948, p. 43; Schatz, 343-44.

<sup>11</sup> That is not to suggest, however, that Spiegel supported a leisurely shooting schedule. Losey recalled (Ciment 99) that although he did get ten days to two weeks to rehearse his actors, he shot the film in only nineteen days!

<sup>12</sup> I choose the phrase "American tragedies" consciously, for perhaps the most important literary intertext for these two films is Theodore Dreiser's masterpiece, *An American Tragedy* (1925). In that novel the lower-middle-class Midwesterner Clyde Griffiths, yearning to live the good life of love and money that his wealthy relatives in the East live, abandons, in what may well be a murder, his working-class girl friend Roberta Arden. As he tries to cover up his role in her drowning, his fate is sealed in much the same way as the outcomes of Webb Garwood in *The Prowler* and Nick Robey in *He Ran All the Way*. A second, although less obvious, naturalist influence is Richard Wright's *Native Son* (1940), particularly the gap that's portrayed so distinctly in the book's opening sections between the glittering promise of the American dream and the harsh realities of Bigger Thomas's situation. It's no accident that John Berry was involved in the theatrical version of that novel on the eve of World War II. See McGilligan, p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> Losey worked with cartoonist/sketch artist John Hubley in pre-planning the film. In planning the Gilvray house, they sought together “to reflect the tawdriness of those expensive Hollywood imitations of Spanish houses which were neither comfortable nor beautiful but status symbols” (Ciment 104-5). Hubley was an activist animator at the Disney Studios who also later was blacklisted for his political activities when he refused to cooperate when called before HUAC. Denning, pp. 415-22, gives a good account of Hubley’s pro-labor political involvements.

<sup>14</sup> One effective foreshadowing element of mise-en-scene in Webb’s apartment is a shooting-range poster of a human figure, which includes a mass of bullet holes in the heart area and two holes in the head.

<sup>15</sup> Losey told Ciment (106) that he had seen *Double Indemnity* “many, many times” and considered it “one of the best films of its sort ever made,” but also stressed the differences between it and *The Prowler*. Cauter (91) delineates some of those differences, and James Naremore encapsulates some of those differences well when he called the film “a more class-conscious version of *Double Indemnity*” (125).

<sup>16</sup> See, for example, Farber’s review and the reviews in *New York Times*, 21 June 1951, 24; *Variety*, 6 June 1951, 6; *New Republic*, 23 July 1951, 23; and *Time*, 25 June 1951, 90.

<sup>17</sup> While in prison, Trumbo wrote to his wife Cleo to make sure that the money Sam Spiegel owed him for scripting *The Prowler* was paid on time. He also, in another letter, asked if she would find out from producer Bob Roberts what kind of movie he wanted to make with Garfield after *He Ran All the Way*. He had hoped to get another job after leaving prison but Garfield was never to make another film. Garfield had even lent Trumbo some money during this difficult financial period so that he could keep making payments on a mortgage. See Trumbo, *Additional Dialogue*, 162-63, 170-71.

<sup>18</sup> McGilligan, *Film Comment*, p. 50. Berry returned to make several films in the United States in the 1970s and after, most notably *Claudine* (1974), starring Diahann Carroll and James Earl Jones, about a single mother struggling to raise her six children in Harlem.

<sup>19</sup> The motel in *The Prowler* also functions differently than it does in *film noir*, according to Sobchack’s perspective. In *The Prowler*, it’s not a place of fragmentation and transitory life but rather the place where Webb and Susan hope to find the security of the domestic sphere that

Webb envied in Susan's home with Gilvray. They move into the owner's apartment and hope to settle down, only to be disrupted when Susan tells Webb of her pregnancy.

<sup>20</sup> Jonathan Munby, 134-42, gives an insightful cultural reading of *Asphalt Jungle*. To Munby, the film "can be interpreted as Huston's lament on the disappearance of New Deal liberalism and the death of civic culture" (135).

# Contributors

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