



Lost in the Fifties: Recovering Phantom Hollywood

Wheeler Winston Dixon

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Lost in the Fifties: Recovering Phantom Hollywood reveals two 1950s: an era glorified in Hollywood movies and a darker reality reflected in the esoteric films of the decade. Renowned film scholar Wheeler Winston Dixon turns to the margins—the television shows and films of a hidden Hollywood—to offer an authentic view of the 1950s that counters the Tinsel-town version. Dixon examines the lost films and directors of the decade. Contrasting traditional themes of love, marriage, and family, Dixon's 1950s film world unveils once-taboo issues of rape, prostitution, and gangs. Television shows such as *Captain Midnight* and *Ramar of the Jungle* are juxtaposed with the cheerful world of *I Love Lucy* and *Howdy Doody*. Highlighting directors including Herbert L. Strock, Leslie Martinson, Arnold Laven, and Charles Haas, Dixon provides new insights on the television series *Racket Squad*, *Topper*, and *The Rifleman* and the teen films *I Was a Teenage Werewolf* and *High School Confidential*.

Geared for scholars and students of film and pop culture, *Lost in the Fifties* includes twenty-five photos—many previously unpublished—and draws on rare interviews with key directors, actors, and producers. The volume provides the first detailed profile of the most prolific producer in Hollywood history, Sam Katzman, and his pop culture classics *Rock Around the Clock* and *Earth vs. The Flying Saucers*. Dixon profiles, for the first time, B-movie phenomenon Fred F. Sears, who directed more than fifty touchstone films of a generation, including the noir thriller *Chicago Syndicate*, the criminal career story *Cell 2455 Death Row*, and the 3-D color western *The Nebraskan*. Also profiled is Ida Lupino, the only woman to direct in Hollywood in the 1950s, who tackled issues of bigamy, teenage pregnancy, and sports corruption in *The Bigamist*, *The Hitch-Hiker*, *Outrage*, *Never Fear*, *Not Wanted*, and *Hard, Fast and Beautiful*, when no major studio would touch such controversial topics. Dixon also looks at the era's social guidance films, which instructed adolescents in acceptable behavior, proper etiquette, and healthy hygiene.

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