

Film Noir Television

Considered by some to be a movement and others a genre, the classic period of film noir stretched from 1941 to 1958, bookended by the seminal films *The Maltese Falcon* and *Touch of Evil*. Film noir (or literally "black film"), a term coined by the French film critic Nino Frank, was often used to describe films that exhibited low-key black and white cinematography reminiscent of German Expressionism and plots centered around moral ambiguity and a rampant fear of sexuality. Often described and studied strictly in terms of its filmic manifestations, many of the stylistic aesthetics and narrative techniques of noir were prevalent on American television in such programs ranging from crime dramas ("Johnny Staccato," "The Man With a Camera," "77 Sunset Strip"), and police procedurals ("Dragnet," "Naked City," "The Untouchables"), to science fiction anthologies ("The Outer Limits," "The Twilight Zone").



Set in the shadows of New York's mean streets, NBC's noir series "Johnny Staccato" (1959-60) starred John Cassavetes as a jazz-pianist turned private detective. Cassavetes also directed a number of episodes.

Many of these programs not only exhibit noir style, but showcase the artistic efforts of many film noir luminaries. John Brahm (*The Lodger, Guest in the House*) directed episodes of both "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" and "The Twilight Zone." John Cassavetes (*Shadows, A Woman Under the Influence*) starred and directed in "Johnny Staccato." Joseph Cotten (*The Third Man, Shadow of a Doubt*) appeared in episodes of both "Alfred Hitchcock Presents" and "77 Sunset Strip." Ida Lupino (*High Sierra, On Dangerous Ground*) directed episodes of both "The Fugitive" and "The Untouchables." Lee Marvin (*The Big Heat, The Killers*) appeared on both "M Squad" and "The Untouchables" while Gerd Oswald (*Crime of Passion*) and Joseph Stefano (*Psycho*) worked together on "The Outer Limits."

While the bulk of these programs ran during the 1950s and '60s, the noir style witnessed a resurgence during the late 1980s and early '90s, mainly exhibited in the works of Michael Mann and David Lynch whose seminal programs "Miami Vice" and "Twin Peaks" showcased a baroque utilization of noir aesthetics. However, these characteristics were also exhibited in over-looked programs, such as the Showtime anthology "Fallen Angels" (with episodes directed by Steven Soderbergh and Alfonso Cuarón), Wes Craven's short-lived "Nightmare Cafe," and the HBO series "The Hitchhiker." During this time there were also several made-for-TV noirs, both remakes ("Dial M for Murder," "Double Indemnity") and original telefilms such as "Poodle Springs," which was adapted from an unfinished novel by Raymond Chandler (*The Big Sleep, Double Indemnity* and *The Long Goodbye*).

COLLECTION PROFILE



Film Noir Television

UCLA Film and Television Archive
Archive Research and Study Center (ARSC)
46 Powell Library, Box 951517 | Los Angeles, CA 90095-1517
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TELEVISION

(sample holdings – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for further listings)

The Adventures of the Falcon. Backlash (ca. 1955). NBC. Director, Ralph Murphy. Writer, Herb Purdum. Cast, Charles McGraw, Douglas Kennedy, Laura Mason. Study Copy: VA5640 T

Alfred Hitchcock Presents. Breakdown (1955-11-13). CBS. Director, Alfred Hitchcock. Writers, Francis Cockrell, Louis Pollock. Cast, Joseph Cotten, Raymond Bailey, Forrest Stanley. A man injured in a car accident desperately tries to communicate that he is still alive. Study Copy: VA3063 T

Alfred Hitchcock Presents. Lamb to the Slaughter (1958-04-13). CBS. Director, Alfred Hitchcock. Writer, Roald Dahl. Cast, Barbara Bel Geddes, Allan Lane, Harold J. Stone. A frozen leg of lamb plays a key role in this story about a woman driven to murder following the discovery that her husband is filing for a divorce. Study Copy: DVD3672 T

Big Town. Father and Son (1952-08-28). CBS. Director, William Asher. Writers, William Asher, E.A. Dupont, David Chantler. Cast, Patrick McVey, Jane Nigh, Hugh Sanders. The son of a police detective is arrested for possession of narcotics. Study Copy: VA13878 T

Bourbon Street Beat. Light Touch of Terror (1960-08-01). ABC. Director, William J. Hole Jr. Cast, Richard Long, Andrew Duggan, Arlene Howell. Investigation of an axe murder in New Orleans. Study Copy: VA21909 T

Charlie Wild, Private Detective. The Case of the Double Trouble (1951-03-05). Director, Barry Shear. Writer, Palmer Thompson. Cast, John McQuade, Philip Truex, John Shellie. Study Copy: VA15378 T

Climax. To Walk the Night (1957-12-10). CBS. Director, Buzz Kulik. Writers, Irwin Gielgud, Gwen Gielgud. Cast, Richard Boone, Walter Matthau, Mary Anderson. A police detective's Christmas Eve is sidelined by a murderer. Study Copy: VA19423 T

Dragnet. The Big Mustache (1955-04-14). NBC. Cast, Jack Webb, Ben Alexander. Police detectives investigate an appliance store robbery. Study Copy: VA5649 T

Dragnet. The Big Reminisce (1955-12-29). NBC. Writer, Frank Burt. Cast, Jack Webb, Ben Alexander. Detectives Friday and Smith discuss past cases. Study Copy: VA5649 T

Dragnet. The Big Bed (1958-06-05). NBC. Director, Jack Webb. Cast, Jack Webb, Ben Alexander. Study Copy: VA18310 T

Dragnet 1967. The Big Hammer (1967-03-02). NBC. Director, Jack Webb. Writer, Henry Irving. Cast, Jack Webb, Harry Morgan. An elderly man is beaten to death with a hammer. Study Copy: DVD1206 T

Dragnet 1967. The Big Shooting (1967-03-30). NBC. Director, Jack Webb. Writer, David Vowell. Cast, Jack Webb, Harry Morgan. A police officer is shot by two paroled convicts. Study Copy: DVD1206 T

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Foreign Intrigue. Bullfighter's Woman (1955). NBC. Director, Sheldon Reynolds. Cast, Gerald Mohr. Post-World War II underworld mystery produced in Europe. Study Copy: VA6050 T

The Fugitive. Fear in a Desert City – Pilot Episode (1963-09-17). ABC. Director, Walter Grauman. Writer, Stanford Whitmore. Cast, David Janssen, Barry Morse, Vera Miles. A doctor is wrongly accused of murder and must take to the road to avoid being put in jail. Study Copy: DVD6223 T

The Fugitive. The Judgment: Part One (1967-08-22). ABC. Director, Don Medford. Writer, George Eckstein. Cast, David Janssen, Barry Morse, Jacqueline Scott. Dr. Kimble discovers the one-armed man who murdered his wife. Study Copy: VA595 T

The Fugitive. The Judgment: Part Two (1967-08-29). ABC. Director, Don Medford. Writer, George Eckstein. Cast, David Janssen, Barry Morse, Jacqueline Scott. Dr. Kimble pursues the one-armed man who murdered his wife. Study Copy: VA596 T

Gangbusters. The Dillinger Case (1952-01-01). NBC. Writer, Phillips H. Lord. Dramatization of the John Dillinger Case. Study Copy: VA10988 T

Johnny Staccato. The Naked Truth (1960-03-27). ABC. Director, Joseph Pevney. Writer, Richard Berg. Cast, John Cassavetes, Michael Landon, Eduardo Ciannelli. Jazz pianist turned detective Johnny Staccato investigates a blackmail scheme. Study Copy: VA7486 T

Johnny Staccato. A Piece of Paradise (1960-06-26). ABC. Director, John Cassavetes. Writer, Robert L. Jacks. Cast, John Cassavetes, Eduardo Ciannelli, Shelly Manne. Staccato helps the police locate a suspected murderer. Study Copy: VA14351 T

Johnny Staccato. Evil (1960-08-28). ABC. Director, John Cassavetes. Writer, Richard Carr. Cast, John Cassavetes, Eduardo Ciannelli, Elisha Cook. Staccato investigates a money-laundering scheme at a local mission house. Study Copy: VA14350 T

Kolchak-The Night Stalker. Firefall (1974-11-08). ABC. Director, Don Weis. Writer, Bill S. Ballinger. Cast, Darren McGavin, Simon Oakland, Jack Grinnage. Kolchak pursues an arsonist. Study Copy: VA7864 T

Kolchak-The Night Stalker. The Ripper (1975-08-30). ABC. Director, Allen Baron. Writer, Rudolph Borchert. Cast, Darren McGavin, Simon Oakland, Jack Grinnage. Kolchak pursues who he believes is Jack the Ripper. Study Copy: VA10519 T

M Squad. Contraband (1958-12-19). NBC. Director, Merwin Gerard. Cast, Paul Newlan, Ross Martin, Lee Marvin. Smugglers may be using foreign cars as a front. Study Copy: VA18713 T

M Squad. The Human Bond (1959-10-23). NBC. Cast, Lee Marvin, Paul Newlan. Police Lieutenant Ballinger must find a bail bondsman's son. Study Copy: VA10942 T

The Man with a Camera. Close Up on Violence (1958-10-31). ABC. Cast, Charles Bronson, Ludwig Stossel. Photographer Mike Kovac is attacked by a gang of thugs. Study Copy: DVD4058 T

Film Noir Television

The Man with a Camera. Another Barrier (1958-11-14). ABC. Cast, Charles Bronson, Ludwig Stossel. Kovac is working on a story about a test pilot, his subject mysteriously disappears. Study Copy: DVD4058 T

The Man with a Camera. Black Light (1959-11-09). ABC. Cast, Charles Bronson, Ludwig Stossel, James Flavin. Kovac is hired to document police bribery. Study Copy: DVD4060 T

The Man with a Camera. The Bride (1959-12-21). ABC. Cast, Charles Bronson, Ludwig Stossel, James Flavin. Photographer Mike Kovac investigates a marriage-fraud scheme. Study Copy: DVD4061 T

Naked City. Fire Island (1958-03-03). ABC. Director, Norman Tokar. Writer, Stirling Silliphant. Cast, Horace McMahon. A bodyguard for a bootlegger kills a U.S. Treasury agent. Study Copy: VA8530 T

Naked City. Hole in the City (1961-02-01). ABC. Director, David Lowell Rich. Writer, Howard Rodman. Cast, Horace McMahon, Robert Duvall. A botched robbery ends in a hostage situation. Study Copy: VA219 T

The Outer Limits. It Crawled Out of the Woodwork (1963-12-09). ABC. Director, Gerd Oswald. Writer, Joseph Stefano. Cast, Ed Asner, Scott Marlowe, Michael Forest. Dust from a vacuum cleaner grows to an enormous size. Study Copy: DVD81 T

The Outer Limits. The Chameleon (1964-04-27). ABC. Director, Gerd Oswald. Writer, Robert Towne. Cast, Robert Duvall. A hired assassin attempts to infiltrate an alien spacecraft to eliminate its occupants. Study Copy: DVD83 T

The Outer Limits. Demon with a Glass Hand (1964-10-17). ABC. Director, Byron Haskin. Writer, Harlan Ellison. Cast, Robert Culp, Arline Martel, Abraham Sofaer. A man with a glass hand attempts to discover his identity. Study Copy: VA830 T

Peter Gunn. The Kill (1958-09-22). NBC. Director, Writer, Blake Edwards. Cast, Craig Stevens, Gavin MacLeod, Lola Albright. A club owner is the victim of ruthless retribution from a gang after refusing to pay for their protection services. Study Copy: VA5378 T

Peter Gunn. The Blind Pianist (1958-10-13). NBC. Director, Writer, Blake Edwards. Cast, Craig Stevens, Lola Albright, Herschel Bernardi. A blind pianist is the only witness to a murder. Study Copy: VA10476 T

Peter Gunn. Crisscross (1959-09-28). NBC. Director, Boris Sagal. Cast, Craig Stevens, Lola Albright, Herschel Bernardi. Armed robbers hit a bank. Study Copy: VA12878 T

Racket Squad. The Con Gamut (1952-07-10). CBS. Director, Erle C. Kenton. Writer, Will Gould. Cast, Reed Hadley, Lisa Howard, King Donovan. The San Francisco Racket Squad investigates a young con woman. Study Copy: VA15454 T

Racket Squad. Anyone Can Be a Sucker (1952-07-31). CBS. Director, James Flood. Writer, Warren Wilson. Cast, Reed Hadley, Nancy Valentine, James Flavin. A racketeer is the victim of a con. Study Copy: VA15454 T

Film Noir Television

77 Sunset Strip. Downbeat (1959-05-08). ABC. Director, Writer, Montgomery Pittman. Cast, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., James Garner, Roger Smith. Private detective Bailey's license is revoked and he goes on a drinking binge, becoming involved with Communists. Study Copy: VA60 T

77 Sunset Strip. The College Caper (1961-07-28). ABC. Director, Robert Douglas. Writer, Douglas Morrow. Cast, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., Roger Smith, Jacqueline Beer. Bailey is hired by a crime boss to protect his son from an ex-con. Study Copy: VA923 T

77 Sunset Strip. 88 Bars (1963-11-01). ABC. Director, Abner Biberman. Writer, Tony Barrett. Cast, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., Cloris Leachman, Joanna Barnes. Bailey is hired to protect a wealthy woman's brother. Study Copy: VA59 T

77 Sunset Strip. The Fumble (1963-12-13). ABC. Director, Lawrence Dobkin. Writer, Tony Barrett. Cast, Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., Richard Long, Stacy Harris. Bailey is hired to keep an eye on an alcoholic whose job is in jeopardy. Study Copy: VA61 T

The Twilight Zone. Mirror Image (1961-08-04). ABC. Director, John Brahm. Writer, Rod Serling. Cast, Vera Miles, Martin Milner, Joe Hamilton. A young woman thinks she is going mad when she is haunted by a strange look-alike in a bus depot. Study Copy: VA4470 T

The Twilight Zone. The Shelter (1961-09-29). ABC. Director, Lamont Johnson. Writer, Rod Serling. Cast, Jack Albertson, Larry Gates, Sandy Kenyon. A news report of unidentified objects heading toward the United States prompts chaos in a suburb. Study Copy: VA7883 T

The Twilight Zone. He's Alive (1963-01-24). ABC. Director, Stuart Rosenberg. Writer, Rod Serling. Cast, Dennis Hopper, Paul Mazursky, Curt Conway. A fascist encounters a shadowy figure that instructs him on how to effectively make rousing public demonstrations. Study Copy: VA7726 T

The Untouchables. Fist of Five (1962-12-04). ABC. Director, Ida Lupino. Writer, Herman Groves. Cast, Robert Stack, James Caan, Lee Marvin. A corrupt cop goes toe-to-toe with Eliot Ness. Study Copy: VA6052 T

The Untouchables. The Man in the Cooler (1963-03-05). ABC. Director, Ida Lupino. Writer, John D.F. Black. Cast, Robert Stack, Abel Fernandez, Nick Georgiade. Eliot Ness pursues a group of bootleggers. Study Copy: VA6051 T

The Untouchables. The Torpedo (1963-05-07). ABC. Director, Ida Lupino. Writers, Ed Adamson, Carey Wilber. Cast, Robert Stack, Abel Fernandez, Nick Georgiade. A truck convoy of bootlegged Canadian whiskey is hijacked en route to Chicago. Study Copy: VA15406 T

NEO-NOIR TELEVISION

(sample holdings – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for further listings)

Crime Story. Torello on Trial (1987-01-16). NBC. Director, Gary Sinise. Writer, Robert Eisele. Cast, Dennis Farina, Ted Levine, Andrew Dice Clay. Detective Torello goes on trial. Study Copy: VA13117 T

Film Noir Television

Crime Story. Top of the World (1987-03-06). NBC. Director, Michael Mann. Writers, Peter Lance, Frederick Rappaport. Cast, Dennis Farina, Gary Sinise, Andrew Dice Clay. Gangster Ray Luca's excesses prove to work to Det. Torello's benefit. Study Copy: VA13119 T

Fallen Angels. The Quiet Room (1993-08-29). Showtime. Director, Steven Soderbergh. Writer, Howard A. Rodman. Cast, Bonnie Bedelia, Joe Mantegna, Vinessa Shaw. A shakedown of city prostitutes goes awry. Study Copy: VA14057 T

Fallen Angels. The Frightening Frammis (1993-09-05). Showtime. Director, Tom Cruise. Writers, Jon Robin Baitz, Howard A. Rodman. Cast, Bill Irwin, Peter Gallagher, Isabella Rossellini. A con man steals \$25,000 and gets more than he bargained for. Inventory Number: T71692

Fallen Angels. Murder, Obliquely (1993-09-19). Showtime. Director, Alfonso Cuaron. Writer, Amanda Silver. Cast, Laura Dern, Diane Lane, Alan Rickman. A love triangle turns fatal. Study Copy: VA14057 T

The Hitchhiker. The Cruellest Cut (1989-11-18). HBO. Director, Michael Robison. Writer, Rebecca Taylor. Cast, Page Fletcher, Melody Anderson, David Elliott. "Johns" are being attacked by a knife-wielding prostitute. Study Copy: VA13267 T

Miami Vice. Brother's Keeper: Pilot Episode (1984-09-16). NBC. Director, Thomas Carter. Writer, Anthony Yerkovich. Cast, Don Johnson, Philip Michael Thomas, Edward James Olmos. Dets. Crockett and Tubbs team up to solve a string of murders connected to a drug lord. Study Copy: VA2222 T

Miami Vice. Season One (1984 – 1985). NBC. Cast, Don Johnson, Philip Michael Thomas, Edward James Olmos. Chronicles the varied cases of two Miami vice squad detectives. Study Copy: DVD932 T – DVD934 T

Nightmare Café. Pilot (1992-01-29). NBC. Director, Armand Mastroianni. Writer, Barry Pullman. Cast, Robert Englund, Lindsay Frost, Jack Coleman. Frank and Fay staff a surreal all-night diner where second chances are given. Study Copy: VA11570 T

Nightmare Café. Dying Well is the Best Revenge (1992-03-06). NBC. Director, Armand Mastroianni. Writer, Barry Pullman. Cast, Robert Englund, Lindsay Frost, Jack Coleman. Frank becomes involved with a woman plotting to kill her husband. Study Copy: VA11570 T

The Singing Detective (ca. 1986). BBC. Director, Jon Amiel. Writer, Dennis Potter. Cast, Michael Gambon, Patrick Malahide, Joanne Whalley. An ailing mystery writer relives his stories through bed-ridden fantasies. Study Copy: VA6407 T – VA6412 T

Tales From the Crypt. You, Murderer (1995-02-15). HBO. Director, Robert Zemeckis. Writers, A.L. Katz, Gilbert Adler. Cast, John Lithgow, Isabella Rossellini, Sherilyn Fenn. Humphrey Bogart and Alfred Hitchcock appear via computer enhanced archival footage in this tale of a plastic surgeon and his client. Study Copy: VA13084 T

Twin Peaks. Pilot (1990-04-08). ABC. Director, David Lynch. Writers, Mark Frost, David Lynch. Cast, Kyle MacLachlan, Lara Flynn Boyle, Sherilyn Fenn. FBI agent Dale Cooper is called in to solve the murder of Laura Palmer, Twin Peaks' homecoming queen. Study Copy: VA6819 T

Film Noir Television

Twin Peaks. Show No. 1 (1990-04-12). ABC. Director, David Lynch. Writers, Mark Frost, David Lynch. Cast, Kyle MacLachlan, Lara Flynn Boyle, Sherilyn Fenn. FBI agent Dale Cooper is called in to solve the murder of Laura Palmer, Twin Peaks' homecoming queen. Study Copy: VA6818 T

Twin Peaks. Show No. 2 (1990-04-19). ABC. Director, David Lynch. Writers, Mark Frost, David Lynch. Cast, Kyle MacLachlan, Lara Flynn Boyle, Sherilyn Fenn. Agent Cooper has a mysterious dream about Laura Palmer's murder. Study Copy: VA6813 T

Twin Peaks. Miss Twin Peaks (1991-06-10). ABC. Director, Tim Hunter. Writers, Mark Frost, Harley Peyton, Robert Engels. Cast, Kyle MacLachlan, Lara Flynn Boyle, Sherilyn Fenn. Agent Dale Cooper must put his own life in danger to save the lives of the Miss Twin Peaks contestants. Part 1 of 2. Study Copy: VA8484 T

Twin Peaks. Beyond Life and Death (1991-06-10). ABC. Director, David Lynch. Cast, Kyle MacLachlan, Lara Flynn Boyle, Sherilyn Fenn. Part two of the final episode of the series. Study Copy: VA8484 T

MADE-FOR-TV NOIR

(sample holdings – consult the Archive Research and Study Center for further listings)

Double Indemnity (1974-03-23). ABC. Director, Jack Smight. Writer, Steve Boscho. Cast, Richard Crenna, Lee J. Cobb, Samantha Eggar. Television remake of Billy Wilder's film classic (1944) about a scheming wife who inveigles an insurance agent into helping her bump off her husband. Study Copy: DVD2888 T

Hallmark Hall of Fame. Dial M for Murder (1958-04-25). NBC. Director, George Schaefer. Writer, Frederick Knott. Cast, Maurice Evans, Rosemary Harris, John Williams. Remake of the Alfred Hitchcock film (1954) about a former professional tennis player who plots to murder his wife. Study Copy: VA286 T

Intimate Stranger (1991-11-15). Showtime. Director, Allan Holzman. Writer, Rob Fresco. Cast, Deborah Harry, Tim Thomerson, James Russo. A phone sex operator is pursued by a murderer. Study Copy: VA11899 T

Poodle Springs (1998-07-25). HBO. Director, Bob Rafelson. Writer, Tom Stoppard. Cast, James Caan, Dina Meyer, David Keith. Aging private detective Philip Marlowe gets mixed up in blackmail and murder. Script was based on an unfinished novel by Raymond Chandler. Study Copy: VA17346 T

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES – UCLA

(for more information consult the UCLA Libraries collection)

Aaker, Everett. *The Encyclopedia of Early Television Crime Fighters: All Regular Cast Members in American Crime and Mystery Series, 1948-1959*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2006.

Silver, Alain and James Ursini. *Film Noir Reader*. New York: Limelight Editions, 2003.

Silver, Alain and James Ursini. *Film Noir Reader 2*. New York: Limelight Editions, 1999.



Film Noir Television

Silver, Alain and James Ursini. *Film Noir Reader 4*. Pompton Plains, N.J.: Limelight Editions, 2004.

Terrace, Vincent. *The Television Crime Fighters Factbook: Over 9,800 Details From 301 Programs, 1937-2003*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2004.

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