

= Casablanca ( film ) =

Casablanca is a 1942 American romantic drama film directed by Michael Curtiz and based on Murray Burnett and Joan Alison 's unproduced stage play Everybody Comes to Rick 's . The film stars Humphrey Bogart , Ingrid Bergman , and Paul Henreid ; it also features Claude Rains , Conrad Veidt , Sydney Greenstreet , Peter Lorre , and Dooley Wilson . Set during World War II , it focuses on an American expatriate who must choose between his love for a woman and helping her Czech Resistance leader husband escape the Vichy @-@ controlled city of Casablanca to continue his fight against the Nazis .

Story editor Irene Diamond convinced producer Hal B. Wallis to purchase the film rights to the play in January 1942 . Brothers Julius and Philip G. Epstein were initially assigned to write the script . However , despite studio resistance , they left to work on Frank Capra 's Why We Fight series early in 1942 . Howard E. Koch was assigned to the screenplay until the Epsteins returned a month later . Casey Robinson assisted with three weeks of rewrites , but his work would later go uncredited . Wallis chose Curtiz to direct the film after his first choice , William Wyler , became unavailable . Principal photography began on May 25 , 1942 , ending on August 3 ; the film was shot entirely at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank , with the exception of one sequence at Van Nuys Airport in Van Nuys , Los Angeles .

Although Casablanca was an A @-@ list film with established stars and first @-@ rate writers , no one involved with its production expected it to be anything out of the ordinary . It was just one of hundreds of pictures produced by Hollywood every year . Casablanca was rushed into release to take advantage of the publicity from the Allied invasion of North Africa a few weeks earlier . It had its world premiere on November 26 , 1942 , in New York City and was released nationally in the United States on January 23 , 1943 . The film was a solid if unspectacular success in its initial run .

Casablanca did account for three Academy Awards ? Best Picture , Director ( Curtiz ) and Adapted Screenplay ( the Epsteins and Koch ) ? and gradually its reputation grew . Its lead characters , memorable lines , and pervasive theme song have all become iconic and the film consistently ranks near the top of lists of the greatest films in history .

= = Plot = =

In December 1941 , American expatriate Rick Blaine is the proprietor of an upscale nightclub and gambling den in Casablanca . " Rick 's Café Américain " attracts a varied clientele : Vichy French and German officials ; refugees desperate to reach the still neutral United States ; and those who prey on them . Although Rick professes to be neutral in all matters , it is later revealed he ran guns to Ethiopia during its war with Italy and fought on the Loyalist side in the Spanish Civil War .

Petty crook Ugarte shows up and boasts to Rick of " letters of transit " obtained by murdering two German couriers . The papers allow the bearers to travel freely around German @-@ controlled Europe and to neutral Portugal , and are thus almost priceless to the refugees stranded in Casablanca . Ugarte plans to sell them at the club that night , and asks Rick to hold them . Before he can meet his contact , he is arrested by the local police under the command of Captain Louis Renault , an unabashedly corrupt Vichy official . Ugarte dies in custody without revealing that he entrusted the letters to Rick .

At this point , the reason for Rick 's bitterness ? former lover Ilsa Lund ? walks into his establishment . Upon spotting Rick 's friend and house pianist , Sam , Ilsa asks him to play " As Time Goes By . " Rick storms over , furious that Sam has disobeyed his order never to perform that song , and is stunned to see Ilsa . She is accompanied by her husband , Victor Laszlo , a renowned fugitive Czech Resistance leader . They need the letters to escape to America to continue his work . German Major Strasser has come to Casablanca to see that Laszlo does not succeed .

When Laszlo makes inquiries , Ferrari , a major underworld figure and Rick 's friendly business rival , divulges his suspicion that Rick has the letters . In private , Rick refuses to sell at any price , telling Laszlo to ask his wife the reason . They are interrupted when Strasser leads a group of officers in singing " Die Wacht am Rhein . " Laszlo orders the house band to play " La Marseillaise . " When

the band looks to Rick , he nods his head . Laszlo starts singing , alone at first , then patriotic fervor grips the crowd and everyone joins in , drowning out the Germans . In retaliation , Strasser has Renault close the club .

That night , Ilsa confronts Rick in the deserted café . When he refuses to give her the letters , she threatens him with a gun , but then confesses that she still loves him . She explains that when they met and fell in love in Paris in 1940 , she believed her husband had been killed attempting to escape from a concentration camp . Later , while preparing to flee with Rick from the imminent fall of the city to the German army , she learned that Laszlo was alive and in hiding . She left Rick without explanation to nurse her sick husband .

Rick 's bitterness dissolves . He agrees to help , letting her believe that she will stay with him when Laszlo leaves . When Laszlo unexpectedly shows up , having narrowly escaped a police raid on a Resistance meeting , Rick has waiter Carl spirit Ilsa away . Laszlo , aware of Rick 's love for Ilsa , tries to persuade him to use the letters to take her to safety . When the police arrest Laszlo on a minor , trumped @-@ up charge , Rick convinces Renault to release him by promising to set him up for a much more serious crime : possession of the letters . To allay Renault 's suspicions , Rick explains that he and Ilsa will be leaving for America . When Renault tries to arrest Laszlo as arranged , Rick forces him at gunpoint to assist in their escape . At the last moment , Rick makes Ilsa board the plane to Lisbon with her husband , telling her that she would regret it if she stayed ? " Maybe not today , maybe not tomorrow , but soon and for the rest of your life . "

Strasser , tipped off by Renault , drives up alone . Rick kills him when he tries to intervene . When policemen arrive , Renault pauses , then orders them to " round up the usual suspects . " Renault suggests to Rick that they join the Free French in Brazzaville . As they walk away into the fog , Rick says , " Louis , I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship . "

= = Cast = =

The play 's cast consisted of 16 speaking parts and several extras ; the film script enlarged it to 22 speaking parts and hundreds of extras . The cast is notably international : only three of the credited actors were born in the United States ( Bogart , Dooley Wilson , and Joy Page ) . The top @-@ billed actors are :

Humphrey Bogart as Rick Blaine . Rick was his first truly romantic role .

Ingrid Bergman as Ilsa Lund . Bergman 's official website calls Ilsa her " most famous and enduring role " . The Swedish actress 's Hollywood debut in *Intermezzo* had been well received , but her subsequent films were not major successes until *Casablanca* . Film critic Roger Ebert called her " luminous " , and commented on the chemistry between her and Bogart : " she paints his face with her eyes " . Other actresses considered for the role of Ilsa included Ann Sheridan , Hedy Lamarr , Luise Rainer and Michèle Morgan . Producer Hal Wallis obtained the services of Bergman , who was contracted to David O. Selznick , by lending Olivia de Havilland in exchange .

Paul Henreid as Victor Laszlo . Henreid , an Austrian actor who had emigrated in 1935 to flee Nazi persecution , was reluctant to take the role ( it " set [ him ] as a stiff forever " , according to Pauline Kael ) , until he was promised top billing along with Bogart and Bergman . Henreid did not get on well with his fellow actors ; he considered Bogart " a mediocre actor . " Bergman called Henreid a " prima donna " .

The second @-@ billed actors are :

Claude Rains as Captain Louis Renault . Rains was an English actor born in London . He had previously worked with Michael Curtiz on *The Adventures of Robin Hood* . He later played the villain in Alfred Hitchcock 's *Notorious* , reteaming with Ingrid Bergman .

Conrad Veidt as Major Heinrich Strasser . He was a refugee German actor who had appeared in *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* . He fled the Nazis , but was frequently cast as a Nazi in American films .

Sydney Greenstreet as Signor Ferrari . Another Englishman , Greenstreet had previously starred with Lorre and Bogart in his film debut in *The Maltese Falcon* .

Peter Lorre as Signor Ugarte . Born in Austria @-@ Hungary , Lorre fled Nazi Germany in 1933

after starring in Fritz Lang 's first sound movie , M ( 1931 ) . Greenstreet and Lorre appeared in several films together over the next few years , although they did not share a scene in Casablanca .

Also credited are :

Curt Bois as the pickpocket . Bois was a German @-@ Jewish actor and refugee . He had one of the longest careers in film , making his first appearance in 1907 and his last in 1987 .

Leonid Kinskey as Sascha , the Russian bartender infatuated with Yvonne . He was born into a Jewish family in Russia and had immigrated to the United States . He told Aljean Harmetz , author of Round Up the Usual Suspects : The Making of Casablanca , that he was cast because he was Bogart 's drinking buddy . He was not the first choice for the role ; he replaced Leo Mostovoy , who was deemed not funny enough .

Madeleine LeBeau as Yvonne , Rick 's soon @-@ discarded girlfriend . The French actress was married to fellow Casablanca performer Marcel Dalio until their divorce in 1942 . She was the last surviving cast member until her death on May 1 , 2016 .

Joy Page as Annina Brandel , the young Bulgarian refugee . The third credited American , she was the stepdaughter of Jack L. Warner , the studio head .

John Qualen as Berger , Laszlo 's Resistance contact . He was born in Canada , but grew up in the United States . He appeared in many of John Ford 's films .

S. Z. Sakall ( credited as S. K. Sakall ) as Carl , the waiter . The Jewish @-@ Hungarian actor fled Germany in 1939 . His three sisters later died in a concentration camp .

Dooley Wilson as Sam . He was one of the few American members of the cast . A drummer , he had to fake playing the piano . Even after shooting had been completed , producer Wallis considered dubbing over Wilson 's voice for the songs . He had originally considered changing the character to a woman and casting singers Hazel Scott , Lena Horne , or Ella Fitzgerald .

Notable uncredited actors are :

Leon Belasco as a dealer in Rick 's Cafe . A Russian @-@ American character actor , he appeared in 13 films the year Casablanca was released .

Marcel Dalio as Emil the croupier . He had been a star in French cinema , appearing in Jean Renoir 's La Grande Illusion and La Règle du Jeu . After he fled the fall of France and went to America , he was reduced to bit parts in Hollywood . He had a key role in another of Bogart 's films , To Have and Have Not .

Helmut Dantine as Jan Brandel , the Bulgarian roulette player married to Annina Brandel . Another Austrian , he had spent time in a concentration camp after the Anschluss , but left Europe after being freed .

William Edmunds as a contact man at Rick 's . He usually played characters with heavy accents , such as Martini in It 's a Wonderful Life ( 1946 ) .

Gregory Gaye as the German banker who is refused entry to the casino by Rick . Gaye was a Russian @-@ born actor who went to the United States in 1917 after the Russian Revolution .

Torben Meyer as the Dutch banker who runs " the second largest banking house in Amsterdam " . Meyer was a Danish actor .

George London , one of those who sing " La Marseillaise " . London was a Montreal @-@ born bass @-@ baritone opera singer .

Georges Renavent as a conspirator .

Corinna Mura as the guitar player who sings " Tango Delle Rose " while Laszlo is consulting with Berger , and later accompanies the crowd on " La Marseillaise " .

Dan Seymour as Abdul the doorman . He was an American actor who often played villains , including the principal one in To Have and Have Not , and one of the secondary ones in Key Largo , both opposite Bogart .

Gerald Oliver Smith as the Englishman whose wallet is stolen . Smith was an English actor .

Norma Varden as the Englishwoman whose husband has his wallet stolen . She was a famous English character actress .

Jean Del Val as the French police radio announcer who ( following the opening montage sequence ) reports the news of the murder of the two German couriers .

Leo White as the waiter Emile ( not to be confused with the croupier Emil ) , from whom Renault

orders a drink when he sits down with the Laszlos . White was a familiar face in many Charlie Chaplin two @-@ reelers in the 1910s , usually playing an upper @-@ class antagonist .

Frank Puglia as a Moroccan rug merchant

Much of the emotional impact of the film has been attributed to the large proportion of European exiles and refugees who were extras or played minor roles ( in addition to leading actors Paul Henried , Conrad Veidt and Peter Lorre ) : such as Louis V. Arco , Trude Berliner , Ilka Grünig , Lotte Palfi , Richard Ryen , Ludwig Stössel , Hans Twardowski , and Wolfgang Zilzer . A witness to the filming of the " duel of the anthems " sequence said he saw many of the actors crying and " realized that they were all real refugees " . Harmetz argues that they " brought to a dozen small roles in Casablanca an understanding and a desperation that could never have come from Central Casting " . They were frequently cast as Nazis in war films , even though many were Jewish .

The comedian Jack Benny may have had an unbilled cameo role , as was claimed by a contemporary newspaper advertisement and reportedly in the Casablanca press book . When asked in his column " Movie Answer Man " , critic Roger Ebert first replied , " It looks something like him . That 's all I can say . " He wrote in a later column , " I think you 're right . "

= = Production = =

The film was based on Murray Burnett and Joan Alison 's then @-@ unproduced play Everybody Comes to Rick 's . The Warner Bros. story analyst who read the play , Stephen Karnot , called it ( approvingly ) " sophisticated hokum " , and story editor Irene Diamond , who had discovered the unproduced play on a trip to New York in 1941 , convinced producer Hal Wallis to buy the rights in January 1942 for \$ 20 @,@ 000 , the most anyone in Hollywood had ever paid for an unproduced play . The project was renamed Casablanca , apparently in imitation of the 1938 hit Algiers . Although an initial filming date was selected for April 10 , 1942 , delays led to a start of production on May 25 . Filming was completed on August 3 , and the production cost \$ 1 @,@ 039 @,@ 000 ( \$ 75 @,@ 000 over budget ) , above average for the time . Unusually , the film was shot in sequence , mainly because only the first half of the script was ready when filming began .

The entire picture was shot in the studio , except for the sequence showing Major Strasser 's arrival , which was filmed at Van Nuys Airport , and a few short clips of stock footage views of Paris . The street used for the exterior shots had recently been built for another film , The Desert Song , and redressed for the Paris flashbacks . It remained on the Warners backlot until the 1960s . The set for Rick 's was built in three unconnected parts , so the internal layout of the building is indeterminate . In a number of scenes , the camera looks through a wall from the cafe area into Rick 's office .

The background of the final scene , which shows a Lockheed Model 12 Electra Junior airplane with personnel walking around it , was staged using little person extras and a proportionate cardboard plane . Fog was used to mask the model 's unconvincing appearance . Nevertheless , the Disney 's Hollywood Studios theme park in Orlando , Florida purchased a Lockheed 12A for its Great Movie Ride attraction , and initially claimed that it was the actual plane used in the film .

Film critic Roger Ebert called Hal Wallis the " key creative force " for his attention to the details of production ( down to insisting on a real parrot in the Blue Parrot bar ) .

The difference between Bergman 's and Bogart 's height caused some problems . She was some two inches ( 5 cm ) taller than Bogart , and claimed Curtiz had Bogart stand on blocks or sit on cushions in their scenes together .

Later , there were plans for a further scene , showing Rick , Renault and a detachment of Free French soldiers on a ship , to incorporate the Allies ' 1942 invasion of North Africa . It proved too difficult to get Claude Rains for the shoot , and the scene was finally abandoned after David O. Selznick judged " it would be a terrible mistake to change the ending . "

= = = Writing = = =

The original play was inspired by a trip to Europe made by Murray Burnett and his wife in 1938 , during which they visited Vienna shortly after the Anschluss and were affected by the anti @-@

Semitism they saw . In the south of France , they went to a nightclub that had a multinational clientele , among them many exiles and refugees , and the prototype of Sam .

The first writers assigned to the script were twins Julius and Philip Epstein , who , against the wishes of Warner Brothers , left at Frank Capra 's request early in 1942 to work on the Why We Fight series in Washington , D.C. While they were gone , the other credited writer , Howard Koch , was assigned ; he produced some thirty to forty pages . When the Epstein brothers returned after about a month , they were reassigned to Casablanca and ? contrary to what Koch claimed in two published books ? his work was not used . In the final Warner Bros. budget for the film , the Epsteins were paid \$ 30 @, @ 416 , while Koch earned \$ 4 @, @ 200 .

In the play , the Ilsa character is an American named Lois Meredith ; she does not meet Laszlo until after her relationship with Rick in Paris has ended . Rick is a lawyer . To make Rick 's motivation more believable , Wallis , Curtiz , and the screenwriters decided to set the film before the attack on Pearl Harbor .

The uncredited Casey Robinson assisted with three weeks of rewrites , including contributing the series of meetings between Rick and Ilsa in the cafe . Koch highlighted the political and melodramatic elements , while Curtiz seems to have favored the romantic parts , insisting on retaining the Paris flashbacks . Wallis wrote the final line , " Louis , I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship , " after shooting had been completed . Bogart had to be called in a month after the end of filming to dub it .

Despite the many writers , the film has what Ebert describes as a " wonderfully unified and consistent " script . Koch later claimed it was the tension between his own approach and Curtiz 's which accounted for this : " Surprisingly , these disparate approaches somehow meshed , and perhaps it was partly this tug of war between Curtiz and me that gave the film a certain balance . " Julius Epstein would later note the screenplay contained " more corn than in the states of Kansas and Iowa combined . But when corn works , there 's nothing better . "

The film ran into some trouble with Joseph Breen of the Production Code Administration ( the Hollywood self @-@ censorship body ) , who opposed the suggestions that Captain Renault extorted sexual favors from his supplicants , and that Rick and Ilsa had slept together in Paris . Extensive changes were made , with several lines of dialogue removed or altered . All direct references to sex were deleted ; Renault 's selling of visas for sex , and Rick and Ilsa 's previous sexual relationship were implied elliptically rather than referenced explicitly . Also , in the original script , when Sam plays " As Time Goes By " , Rick remarks , " What the ? ? are you playing ? " This line implying a curse word was removed at the behest of the Hays Office .

= = = Direction = = =

Wallis ' first choice for director was William Wyler , but he was unavailable , so Wallis turned to his close friend Michael Curtiz . Curtiz was a Hungarian Jewish émigré ; he had come to the U.S. in the 1920s , but some of his family were refugees from Nazi Europe .

Roger Ebert has commented that in Casablanca " very few shots ... are memorable as shots , " as Curtiz wanted images to express the story rather than to stand alone . He contributed relatively little to development of the plot . Casey Robinson said Curtiz " knew nothing whatever about story ... he saw it in pictures , and you supplied the stories . "

Critic Andrew Sarris called the film " the most decisive exception to the auteur theory " , of which Sarris was the most prominent proponent in the United States . Aljean Harmetz has responded , " nearly every Warner Bros. picture was an exception to the auteur theory " . Other critics give more credit to Curtiz . Sidney Rosenzweig , in his study of the director 's work , sees the film as a typical example of Curtiz 's highlighting of moral dilemmas .

The second unit montages , such as the opening sequence of the refugee trail and the invasion of France , were directed by Don Siegel .

= = = Cinematography = = =

The cinematographer was Arthur Edson , a veteran who had previously shot *The Maltese Falcon* and *Frankenstein* . Particular attention was paid to photographing Bergman . She was shot mainly from her preferred left side , often with a softening gauze filter and with catch lights to make her eyes sparkle ; the whole effect was designed to make her face seem " ineffably sad and tender and nostalgic " . Bars of shadow across the characters and in the background variously imply imprisonment , the crucifix , the symbol of the Free French Forces and emotional turmoil . Dark film noir and expressionist lighting was used in several scenes , particularly towards the end of the picture . Rosenzweig argues these shadow and lighting effects are classic elements of the Curtiz style , along with the fluid camera work and the use of the environment as a framing device .

= = = Music = = =

The music was written by Max Steiner , who was best known for the score for *Gone with the Wind* . The song " As Time Goes By " by Herman Hupfeld had been part of the story from the original play ; Steiner wanted to write his own composition to replace it , but Bergman had already cut her hair short for her next role ( María in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* ) and could not re-@-@ shoot the scenes which incorporated the song , so Steiner based the entire score on it and " La Marseillaise " , the French national anthem , transforming them to reflect changing moods .

Particularly notable is the " duel of the songs " between Strasser and Laszlo at Rick 's cafe . In the soundtrack , " La Marseillaise " is played by a full orchestra . Originally , the opposing piece for this iconic sequence was to be the " Horst Wessel Lied " , a Nazi anthem , but this was still under international copyright in non @-@ Allied countries . Instead " Die Wacht am Rhein " was used . The opening bars of the " Deutschlandlied " , the national anthem of Germany , are featured throughout the score as a motif to represent the Germans , much as " La Marseillaise " is used to represent the Allies .

Other songs include :

" It Had to Be You " , music by Isham Jones , lyrics by Gus Kahn

" Shine " , music by Ford Dabney , lyrics by Cecil Mack and Lew Brown

" Avalon " , music and lyrics by Al Jolson , Buddy DeSylva and Vincent Rose

" Perfidia " , by Alberto Dominguez

" The Very Thought of You " , by Ray Noble , and

" Knock on Wood " , music by M. K. Jerome , lyrics by Jack Scholl , the only original song .

The piano featured in the Paris flashback sequences was sold in New York City on December 14 , 2012 , at Sotheby 's for more than \$ 600 @,@ 000 to an anonymous bidder . The piano Sam " plays " in Rick 's Café Américain , put up for auction with other film memorabilia by Turner Classic Movies and Bonhams in New York in November 2014 , sold for \$ 3 @.@ 4 million .

= = Timing of release = =

Although an initial release date was anticipated for spring 1943 , the film premiered at the Hollywood Theater in New York City on November 26 , 1942 , to coincide with the Allied invasion of North Africa and the capture of Casablanca . In the 1 @,@ 500 @-@ seat theater , the film grossed \$ 255 @,@ 000 over ten weeks . It went into general release on January 23 , 1943 , to take advantage of the Casablanca Conference , a high @-@ level meeting in the city between British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and American President Franklin D. Roosevelt . It was a substantial but not spectacular box @-@ office success , taking \$ 3 @.@ 7 million on its initial U.S. release , making it the seventh highest @-@ grossing film of 1943 . The Office of War Information prevented screening of the film to troops in North Africa , believing it would cause resentment among Vichy supporters in the region .

= = Reception = =

= = = Initial response = = =

Casablanca received " consistently good reviews ". Bosley Crowther of The New York Times wrote , " The Warners ... have a picture which makes the spine tingle and the heart take a leap . " The newspaper applauded the combination of " sentiment , humor and pathos with taut melodrama and bristling intrigue " . While Crowther noted its " devious convolutions of the plot " , he praised the screenplay quality as " of the best " and the cast 's performances as " all of the first order " .

The trade paper Variety commended the film 's " combination of fine performances , engrossing story and neat direction " and the " variety of moods , action , suspense , comedy and drama that makes Casablanca an A @-@ 1 entry at the b.o. " " Film is splendid anti @-@ Axis propaganda , particularly inasmuch as the propaganda is strictly a by @-@ product of the principal action and contributes to it instead of getting in the way . " The review also applauded the performances of Bergman and Henreid and note that " Bogart , as might be expected , is more at ease as the bitter and cynical operator of a joint than as a lover , but handles both assignments with superb finesse . " Some other reviews were less enthusiastic . The New Yorker rated it only " pretty tolerable " .

= = = Lasting influence = = =

The film has grown in popularity . Murray Burnett called it " true yesterday , true today , true tomorrow " . By 1955 , the film had brought in \$ 6 @. @ 8 million , making it the third most successful of Warners ' wartime movies ( behind Shine On , Harvest Moon and This Is the Army ) . On April 21 , 1957 , the Brattle Theater of Cambridge , Massachusetts , showed the film as part of a season of old movies . It was so popular that it began a tradition of screening Casablanca during the week of final exams at Harvard University , which continues to the present day . Other colleges have adopted the tradition . Todd Gitlin , a professor of sociology who had attended one of these screenings , has said that the experience was " the acting out of my own personal rite of passage " . The tradition helped the movie remain popular while other famous films of the 1940s have faded away . By 1977 , Casablanca was the most frequently broadcast film on American television .

On the film 's 50th anniversary , the Los Angeles Times called Casablanca 's great strength " the purity of its Golden Age Hollywoodness [ and ] the enduring craftsmanship of its resonantly hokey dialogue " . Bob Strauss wrote in the newspaper that the film achieved a " near @-@ perfect entertainment balance " of comedy , romance , and suspense .

According to Roger Ebert , Casablanca is " probably on more lists of the greatest films of all time than any other single title , including Citizen Kane " because of its wider appeal . Ebert opined that Citizen Kane is generally considered to be a " greater " film , but Casablanca is more loved . In his opinion , the film is popular because " the people in it are all so good " , and it is " a wonderful gem " . Ebert said that he has never heard of a negative review of the film , even though individual elements can be criticized , citing unrealistic special effects and the stiff character / portrayal of Laszlo . Critic Leonard Maltin considers Casablanca to be " the best Hollywood movie of all time . "

Rick , according to Rudy Behlmer , is " not a hero ... not a bad guy " : he does what is necessary to get along with the authorities and " sticks his neck out for nobody " . The other characters , in Behlmer 's words , are " not cut and dried " and come into their goodness over the course of the film . Renault begins as a collaborator with the Nazis who extorts sexual favors from refugees and has Ugarte killed . Even Ilsa , the least active of the main characters , is " caught in the emotional struggle " over which man she really loves . By the end , however , " everybody is sacrificing . " Behlmer also emphasized the variety in the picture : " it 's a blend of drama , melodrama , comedy [ and ] intrigue " .

A few reviewers have had reservations . To Pauline Kael , " It 's far from a great film , but it has a special appealingly schlocky romanticism ... " Umberto Eco wrote that " by any strict critical standards ... Casablanca is a very mediocre film . " He viewed the changes the characters undergo as inconsistent rather than complex : " It is a comic strip , a hotch @-@ potch , low on psychological credibility , and with little continuity in its dramatic effects . " However , he added that due to the presence of multiple archetypes which allow " the power of Narrative in its natural state without Art

intervening to discipline it " , it is a movie reaching " Homeric depths " as a " phenomenon worthy of awe . "

In the November / December 1982 issue of American Film , Chuck Ross claimed that he retyped the screenplay to Casablanca , changing the title back to Everybody Comes to Rick 's and the name of the piano player to Dooley Wilson , and submitted it to 217 agencies . Eighty @-@ five of them read it ; of those , thirty @-@ eight rejected it outright , thirty @-@ three generally recognized it ( but only eight specifically as Casablanca ) , three declared it commercially viable , and one suggested turning it into a novel .

= = = Influence on later works = = =

Many subsequent films have drawn on elements of Casablanca . Passage to Marseille reunited Bogart , Rains , Curtiz , Greenstreet and Lorre in 1944 . There are similarities between Casablanca and two later Bogart films , To Have and Have Not ( 1944 ) and Sirocco ( 1951 ) .

Parodies have included the Marx Brothers ' A Night in Casablanca ( 1946 ) , Neil Simon 's The Cheap Detective ( 1978 ) , and Out Cold ( 2001 ) . Indirectly , it provided the title for the 1995 neo @-@ noir film The Usual Suspects . Woody Allen 's Play It Again , Sam ( 1972 ) appropriated Bogart 's Casablanca persona as the fantasy mentor for Allen 's nebbishy character , featuring actor Jerry Lacy in the role of Bogart .

The film Casablanca was a plot device in the science @-@ fiction television movie Overdrawn at the Memory Bank ( 1983 ) , based on John Varley 's story . It was referred to in Terry Gilliam 's dystopian Brazil ( 1985 ) . Warner Bros. produced its own parody in the homage Carrotblanca , a 1995 Bugs Bunny cartoon . In Casablanca , a novella by Argentine writer Edgar Brau , the protagonist somehow wanders into Rick 's Café Américain and listens to a strange tale related by Sam .

= = Interpretation = =

Casablanca has been subjected to many different readings . Semioticians account for the film 's popularity by claiming that its inclusion of a whole series of stereotypes paradoxically strengthens the film . Umberto Eco explained :

Thus Casablanca is not just one film . It is many films , an anthology . Made haphazardly , it probably made itself , if not actually against the will of its authors and actors , then at least beyond their control . And this is the reason it works , in spite of aesthetic theories and theories of film making . For in it there unfolds with almost telluric force the power of Narrative in its natural state , without Art intervening to discipline it .

... When all the archetypes burst in shamelessly , we reach Homeric depths . Two clichés make us laugh . A hundred clichés move us . For we sense dimly that the clichés are talking among themselves , and celebrating a reunion .

Eco also singled out sacrifice as one of the film 's key themes : " the myth of sacrifice runs through the whole film . " It was this theme which resonated with a wartime audience that was reassured by the idea that painful sacrifice and going off to war could be romantic gestures done for the greater good .

Koch also considered the film a political allegory . Rick is compared to President Franklin D. Roosevelt , who gambled " on the odds of going to war until circumstance and his own submerged nobility force him to close his casino ( partisan politics ) and commit himself ? first by financing the Side of Right and then by fighting for it . " The connection is reinforced by the film 's title , which means " white house " .

Harvey Greenberg presents a Freudian reading in his The Movies on Your Mind , in which the transgressions which prevent Rick from returning to the United States constitute an Oedipus complex , which is resolved only when Rick begins to identify with the father figure of Laszlo and the cause which he represents . Sidney Rosenzweig argues that such readings are reductive , and that the most important aspect of the film is its ambiguity , above all in the central character of Rick ; he



cites the different names which each character gives Rick ( Richard , Ricky , Mr. Rick , Herr Rick , boss , and so on ) as evidence of the different meanings which he has for each person .

= = Awards and honors = =

Because of its November 1942 release , the New York Film Critics decided to include the film in its 1942 award season for best picture . Casablanca lost to *In Which We Serve* . However , the Academy stated that since the film went into national release in the beginning of 1943 , it would be included in that year 's nominations . Casablanca was nominated for eight Academy Awards , and won three . As Bogart stepped out of his car at the Academy Awards ceremony , " the crowd surged forward , almost engulfing him and his wife , Mayo Methot . It took 12 police officers to rescue the two , and a red @-@ faced , startled , yet smiling Bogart heard a chorus of cries of ' good luck ' and ' here ? s looking at you , kid ' as he was rushed into the theater . "

When the award for Best Picture was announced , producer Hal B. Wallis got up to accept , but studio head Jack L. Warner rushed up to the stage " with a broad , flashing smile and a look of great self @-@ satisfaction , " Wallis later recalled . " I couldn 't believe it was happening . Casablanca had been my creation ; Jack had absolutely nothing to do with it . As the audience gasped , I tried to get out of the row of seats and into the aisle , but the entire Warner family sat blocking me . I had no alternative but to sit down again , humiliated and furious ... Almost forty years later , I still haven 't recovered from the shock . " This incident would lead Wallis to leave Warner Bros. in April .

In 1989 , the film was one of the first 25 films selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry as being deemed " culturally , historically , or aesthetically significant " . In 2005 , it was named one of the 100 greatest films of the last 80 years by Time magazine ( the selected films were not ranked ) . Screenwriting teacher Robert McKee maintains that the script is " the greatest screenplay of all time " . In 2006 , the Writers Guild of America , West agreed , voting it the best ever in its list of the 101 greatest screenplays . The film has been selected by the American Film Institute for many of their lists .

= = Home media releases = =

Casablanca was initially released on Betamax and VHS by Magnetic Video and later by CBS / Fox Video ( as United Artists owned the rights at the time ) . It was next released on laserdisc in 1991 , and on VHS in 1992 ? both from MGM / UA Home Entertainment ( distributing for Turner Entertainment Co . ) , which at the time was distributed by Warner Home Video . It was first released on DVD in 1997 by MGM , containing the trailer and a making @-@ of featurette ( Warner Home Video reissued the DVD in 2000 ) . A subsequent two @-@ disc special edition , containing audio commentaries , documentaries , and a newly remastered visual and audio presentation , was released in 2003 .

An HD DVD was released on November 14 , 2006 , containing the same special features as the 2003 DVD . Reviewers were impressed with the new high @-@ definition transfer of the film .

A Blu @-@ ray release with new special features came out on December 2 , 2008 ; it is also available on DVD . The Blu @-@ ray was initially only released as an expensive gift set with a booklet , a luggage tag and other assorted gift @-@ type items . It was eventually released as a stand @-@ alone Blu @-@ ray in September 2009 . On March 27 , 2012 , Warner released a new 70th Anniversary Ultimate Collector 's Edition Blu @-@ ray / DVD combo set . It includes a brand @-@ new 4K restoration and new bonus material .

= = Sequels and other versions = =

Almost from the moment Casablanca became a hit , talk began of producing a sequel . One titled *Brazzaville* ( in the final scene , Renault recommends fleeing to that Free French @-@ held city ) was planned , but never produced . Since then , no studio has seriously considered filming a sequel or outright remake . François Truffaut refused an invitation to remake the film in 1974 , citing its cult

status among American students as his reason . Attempts to recapture the magic of Casablanca in other settings , such as Caboblanco ( 1980 ) , " a South American @-@ set retooling of Casablanca " , and Havana ( 1990 ) have been poorly received .

Stories of a Casablanca remake or sequel nonetheless persist . In 2008 , the Daily Mail reported that Madonna was pursuing a remake set in modern @-@ day Iraq . In 2012 , both The Daily Telegraph and Entertainment Weekly reported on efforts by Cass Warner , granddaughter of Harry Warner and friend of the late Howard Koch , to produce a sequel featuring the search by Rick Blaine and Ilsa Lund 's illegitimate son for the whereabouts of his biological father .

The novel As Time Goes By , written by Michael Walsh and published in 1998 , was authorized by Warner . The novel picks up where the film leaves off , and also tells of Rick 's mysterious past in America . The book met with little success . David Thomson provided an unofficial sequel in his 1985 novel Suspects .

There have been two short @-@ lived television series based upon Casablanca , both considered prequels . The first aired from 1955 to 1956 , with Charles McGraw as Rick and Marcel Dalio , who played Emil the croupier in the movie , as Renault ; it aired on ABC as part of the wheel series Warner Bros. Presents . There were ten hour @-@ long episodes . Another , briefly broadcast on NBC in 1983 , starred David Soul as Rick , Ray Liotta as Sacha , and Scatman Crothers as a somewhat elderly Sam . Five hour @-@ long episodes were produced .

There were several radio adaptations of the film . The two best @-@ known were a thirty @-@ minute adaptation on The Screen Guild Theater on April 26 , 1943 , starring Bogart , Bergman , and Henreid , and an hour @-@ long version on the Lux Radio Theater on January 24 , 1944 , featuring Alan Ladd as Rick , Hedy Lamarr as Ilsa , and John Loder as Victor Laszlo . Two other thirty @-@ minute adaptations were aired : on Philip Morris Playhouse on September 3 , 1943 , and on Theater of Romance on December 19 , 1944 , in which Dooley Wilson reprised his role as Sam .

Julius Epstein made two attempts to turn the film into a Broadway musical , in 1951 and 1967 , but neither made it to the stage . The original play , Everybody Comes to Rick 's , was produced in Newport , Rhode Island , in August 1946 , and again in London in April 1991 , but met with no success . The film was adapted into a musical by the Takarazuka Revue , an all @-@ female Japanese musical theater company , and ran from November 2009 through February 2010 .

= = = Colorization = = =

Casablanca was part of the film colorization controversy of the 1980s , when a colorized version aired on the television network WTBS . In 1984 , MGM / UA hired Color Systems Technology to colorize the film for \$ 180 @,@ 000 . When Ted Turner of Turner Broadcasting System purchased MGM / UA 's film library two years later , he canceled the request , before contracting American Film Technologies ( AFT ) in 1988 . AFT completed the colorization in two months at a cost of \$ 450 @,@ 000 . Turner later reacted to the criticism of the colorization , saying , " [ Casablanca ] is one of a handful of films that really doesn 't have to be colorized . I did it because I wanted to . All I 'm trying to do is protect my investment . "

The Library of Congress deemed that the color change differed so much from the original film that it gave a new copyright to Turner Entertainment . When the colorized film debuted on WTBS , it was watched by three million viewers , not making the top @-@ ten viewed cable shows for the week . Although Jack Matthews of the Los Angeles Times called the finished product " state of the art " , it was mostly met with negative critical reception . It was briefly available on home video . Gary Edgerton , writing for the Journal of Popular Film & Television criticized the colorization , " ... Casablanca in color ended up being much blander in appearance and , overall , much less visually interesting than its 1942 predecessor . " Bogart 's son Stephen said , " if you 're going to colorize Casablanca , why not put arms on the Venus de Milo ? "

= = Rumors = =

Several rumors and misconceptions have grown up around the film , one being that Ronald Reagan

was originally chosen to play Rick . This originates in a press release issued by the studio early on in the film 's development , but by that time the studio already knew that he was going into the Army , and he was never seriously considered . George Raft claimed that he had turned down the lead role . Studio records make clear , however , that Wallis was committed to Bogart from the start .

Another well @-@ known story is that the actors did not know until the last day of shooting how the film was to end . The original play ( set entirely in the cafe ) ended with Rick sending Ilsa and Laszlo to the airport . During scriptwriting , the possibility was discussed of Laszlo being killed in Casablanca , allowing Rick and Ilsa to leave together , but as Casey Robinson wrote to Hal Wallis before filming began , the ending of the film " set up for a swell twist when Rick sends her away on the plane with Laszlo . For now , in doing so , he is not just solving a love triangle . He is forcing the girl to live up to the idealism of her nature , forcing her to carry on with the work that in these days is far more important than the love of two little people . " It was certainly impossible for Ilsa to leave Laszlo for Rick , as the production code forbade showing a woman leaving her husband for another man . The concern was not whether Ilsa would leave with Laszlo , but how this result could be engineered . The problem was solved when the Epstein brothers , Julius and Philip , were driving down Sunset Boulevard and stopped for the light at Beverly Glen . At that instant the identical twins turned to each other and simultaneously cried out , " Round up the usual suspects ! " By the time they had driven past Fairfax and the Cahuenga Pass and through the Warner Brothers studio 's portals at Burbank , in the words of Julius Epstein , " the idea for the farewell scene between a tearful Bergman and a suddenly noble Bogart " had been formed and all the problems of the ending had been solved .

The confusion was probably caused by Bergman 's later statement that she did not know which man she was meant to be in love with . While rewrites did occur during the filming , Aljean Harmetz 's examination of the scripts has shown that many of the key scenes were shot after Bergman knew how the film would end ; any confusion was , in critic Roger Ebert 's words , " emotional " , not " factual " .

= = Errors and inaccuracies = =

The film has several logical flaws , the foremost being the two " letters of transit " which enable their bearers to leave Vichy French territory . According to the audio , Ugarte says the letters had been signed by ( depending on the listener ) either Free French General Charles de Gaulle or Vichy General Maxime Weygand . The English subtitles on the official DVD read de Gaulle , while the French ones specify Weygand . Weygand had been the Vichy Delegate @-@ General for the North African colonies until November 1941 , a month before the film is set . De Gaulle was the head of the Free French government in exile , so a letter signed by him would have provided no benefit . A classic MacGuffin , the letters were invented by Joan Alison for the original play and never questioned . Rick suggests to Renault that the letters would not have allowed Ilsa to escape , let alone Laszlo : " People have been held in Casablanca in spite of their legal rights . "

In the same vein , though Laszlo asserts that the Nazis cannot arrest him , saying , " This is still unoccupied France ; any violation of neutrality would reflect on Captain Renault , " Ebert points out , " It makes no sense that he could walk around freely . ... He would be arrested on sight . " Harmetz , however , suggests that Strasser intentionally allows Laszlo to move about , hoping that he will tell them the names of Resistance leaders in occupied Europe in exchange for Ilsa being allowed to leave for Lisbon .

In addition , no uniformed German troops were stationed in Casablanca during World War II , and neither American nor French troops occupied Berlin in 1918 .

According to Harmetz , few of the refugees portrayed would have gone to Casablanca at the time portrayed . The usual route out of Germany was via Vienna , Prague , Paris , and London . Others tried to go from Paris through the Pyrenees to Spain . The film 's technical advisor , Robert Aisner , traced the path to Morocco shown in Casablanca 's opening scene .

= = Quotations = =

One of the lines most closely associated with the film ? " Play it again , Sam " ? is a misquotation . When Ilsa first enters the Café Americain , she spots Sam and asks him to " Play it once , Sam , for old times ' sake . " After he feigns ignorance , she responds , " Play it , Sam . Play ' As Time Goes By ' . " Later that night , alone with Sam , Rick says , " You played it for her , you can play it for me , " and " If she can stand it , I can ! Play it ! " .

Rick 's toast to Ilsa , " Here 's looking at you , kid " , used four times , is not in the draft screenplays , but has been attributed to something Bogart said to Bergman as he taught her poker between takes . It was voted the fifth most memorable line in cinema in AFI 's 100 Years ... 100 Movie Quotes by the American Film Institute .

Six lines from Casablanca appeared in the AFI list , the most of any film ( Gone with the Wind and The Wizard of Oz tied for second with three apiece ) . The other five are :

" Louis , I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship . " ? 20th

" Play it , Sam . Play ' As Time Goes By ' . " ? 28th

" Round up the usual suspects . " ? 32nd

" We 'll always have Paris . " ? 43rd

" Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world , she walks into mine . " ? 67th

Additionally , the line " Ilsa , I 'm no good at being noble , but it doesn 't take much to see that the problems of three little people don 't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world " was nominated for the list , but was not selected .