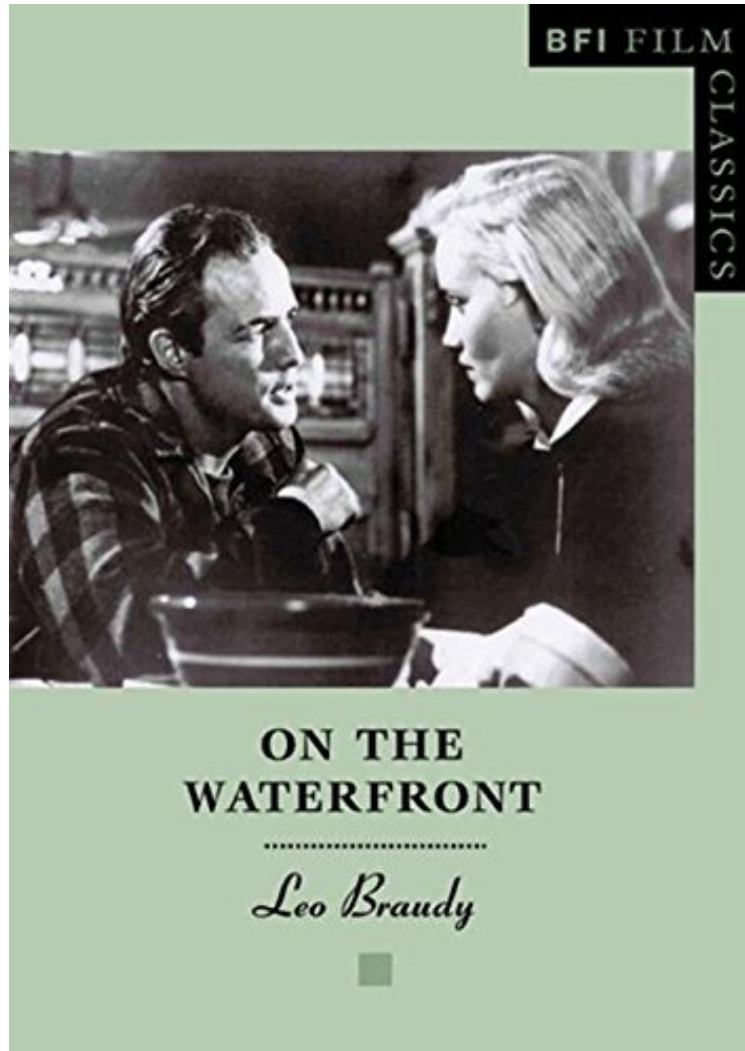


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On the Waterfront (BFI Film Classics)

Leo Braudy

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#1339375 in Books 2005-04-30 2008-01-22Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 7.54 x .26 x 5.46l, .36 #File Name: 184457072X88 pages | File size: 26.Mb

Leo Braudy : On the Waterfront (BFI Film Classics) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised On the Waterfront (BFI Film Classics):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A ContenderBy Dash ManchetteIt is easy to see On the Waterfront as strongly autobiographical of, or even cathartic for, its director Elia Kazan. Kazan named names of communists to Congress, earning the contempt and hostility of the artistic world, then, as now, overwhelmingly left-leaning. In the movie, Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) testifies against the mob controlling the waterfront, despite a strong-as-steel ethos against ratting, the `D and D' philosophy (Deaf and Dumb) as described in the movie itself. Beaten and bruised, Malloy nonetheless triumphs in the end, bringing salvation to his brethren in the process.As Leo Braudy demonstrates

in this thin book from the British Film Institute, such an interpretation is not only too narrow, but grossly misguided. Corruption on the waterfront piers of New York was rampant at the time, and viewing the movie simply as a veiled defense of testifying gives woeful short shrift to the real issues it was trying to address. The story of waterfront corruption had captured the imagination of several people at once, including Kazan and writer Arthur Miller, who was creating a story based upon the piers of the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn. The collaboration between these two fell apart, and screenwriter Budd Schulberg filled the void. Schulberg had done significant research on the issue, focusing his attentions on an actual priest that served as the model for the movie's Father Barry (Karl Malden), and publishing articles in the New York press. Over several years, numerous rewrites and a Hollywood more interested in Prince Valiant in Technicolor than a black and white movie about the working class, *On the Waterfront* eventually got made and became almost an instant classic. After a wonderful discussion about the background issues, Braudy does a solid job of discussing the making of the movie, its content, including the intricate relationship between the characters, its reception and the various interpretations it has received over the years. Thankfully lacking in the patronizing tendency of too many entries in the BFI library to clobber the reader with leftist politics, especially race and gender interpretations straight out of a sophomore college curriculum, Braudy tells it to us straight. The result is a solid book that adds to our understanding of one of the more important movies from one of the most important directors in the history of cinema. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By MiamiAs promised

"I could have been a contender, I could have been somebody." So speaks the haunted former boxer Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) to his brother Charley (Rod Steiger) in a scene from *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954) that is one of the most famous in all cinema. Set among unionised New York longshoremen, Kazan's film (from a screenplay by Budd Schulberg) recounts Terry's struggle against corruption and his ultimate, hard-won victory. The marvellous performances of Brando, Steiger and Eva Marie Saint (as well as Karl Malden and Lee J. Cobb), Boris Kaufman's photography and Leonard Bernstein's score all justify the film's fame. But *On the Waterfront* is also notorious, regarded by many as an attempt at justifying the decision on the part of Kazan (and Schulberg) to name names before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. That controversial decision is still incendiary today (as was evidenced in the furore that surrounded Kazan's Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1999). With Kazan's death in 2003 and Brando's in 2004, a reappraisal of *On the Waterfront* is timely and necessary. In this definitive study, Leo Braudy tells the complicated story of the film's production. He revisits the facts behind the controversy of Kazan's testimony but, above all, he analyses the elements which contribute to the enduring appeal of *On the Waterfront*: the Method-inspired acting, the music and cinematography, the use of authentic locations and its powerfully symbolic depiction of post-war American values.

From the Back Cover I could have been a contender, I could have been somebody.' So speaks the haunted former boxer Terry Malloy (Marlon Brando) to his brother Charley (Rod Steiger) in a scene from *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954) that is one of the most famous in all cinema. Set among unionised New York longshoremen, Kazan's film (from a screenplay by Budd Schulberg) recounts Terry's struggle against corruption and his ultimate, hard-won victory. The marvellous performances of Brando, Steiger and Eva Marie Saint (as well as Karl Malden and Lee J. Cobb), Boris Kaufman's photography and Leonard Bernstein's score all justify the film's fame. But *On the Waterfront* is also notorious, regarded by many as an attempt at justifying the decision on the part of Kazan (and Schulberg) to name names before the House UnAmerican Activities Committee. That controversial decision is still incendiary today (as was evidenced in the furore that surrounded Kazan's Academy Award for Lifetime Achievement in 1999). With Kazan's death in 2003 and Brando's in 2004, a reappraisal of *On the Waterfront* is timely and necessary. In this definitive study, Leo Braudy tells the complicated story of the film's production. He revisits the facts behind the controversy of Kazan's testimony but, above all, he analyses the elements which contribute to the enduring appeal of *On the Waterfront*: the Method-inspired acting, the music and cinematography, the use of authentic locations and its powerfully symbolic depiction of post-war American values. About the Author Leo Braudy is University Professor and Bing Professor of English at the University of Southern California. He is the author of, among other books, *From Chivalry to Terrorism: War and the Changing Nature of Masculinity* (2003).