"He that troubleth his own house shall inherit the wind; And the foolish shall be servant to the wise of heart." Proverbs 11:29

STANLEY KRAMER (29 September 1913, Brooklyn—19 February 2001, Woodland Hills, CA, pneumonia) from Leonard Maltin's Film Encyclopedia: Although unfashionable with latter-day film critics who find some of his "message movies" to be simplistic, Stanley Kramer can take credit for producing (and later directing) some of Hollywood's boldest, most socially conscious movies— at a time when much of the industry was reverting to formula and cowering in the wake of the Communist witch-hunts. Moreover, his projects consistently attracted the top talent working on both sides of the cameras in Hollywood. Making his pictures independently gave Kramer freedom from studio interference, and he produced a run of powerful films, among them the gritty boxing drama Champion a study of Army racism, Home of the Brave (both 1949); a drama of paralyzed war veterans, The Men (1950, Marlon Brando's first film); a notable adaptation of Arthur Miller's play Death of a Salesman (1951); and the anti-McCarthy Western, High Noon (1952). He then signed with Columbia, where he produced the first "biker" film, The Wild One and The Caine Mutiny (both 1954), as well as a Dr. Seuss musical fantasy, The 5,000 Fingers of Dr. T (1953), a notorious flop in its day but now a cult classic. Kramer finally began directing with, oddly, a glossy soap opera, Not as a Stranger (1955).

After helming a large-scale actioner, The Pride and the Passion (1957), he returned to social commentary, attacking racism in The Defiant Ones (1958, Oscar-nominated for Best Picture and Best Director), nuclear proliferation in On the Beach (1959), creationism in Inherit the Wind (1960), and Nazi war criminals in Judgment at Nuremberg (1961, Oscar-nominated for Best Picture and Director). Challenged to make something "a little less serious," he vowed to make the "comedy to end all comedies," and almost pulled it off with the elephantine, overproduced, all-star blockbuster It's a Mad Mad Mad Mad World (1963), still his most popular film. After a lavish adaptation of Ship of Fools (1965), Kramer made Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967, Oscar-nominated for Best Picture and Director), which dealt head-on with interracial marriage. His later films, including The Secret of Santa Vittoria (1969), R.P.M (1970), Bless the Beasts and Children (1971), the underrated Oklahomia Crude (1973), and The Domino Principle (1977), were not successful, to say the least. The Runner Stumbles (1979), a particularly aloof and unconvincing thriller, was dismissed by critics and audiences alike, making it a dismal swan song to Kramer's career. In 1980 he retired and moved to Seattle, where he taught and wrote a newspaper column; a decade later he was back in Hollywood, planning new film projects.

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STANLEY KRAMER: INHERIT THE WIND 1960
128 min.
Spencer Tracy...Henry Drummond
Fredric March...Matthew Harrison Brady
Gene Kelly...E. K. Hornbeck
Dick York...Bertram T. Cates
Donna Anderson...Rachel Brown
Harry Morgan...Judge Mel
Claude Akins...Rev. Jeremiah Brown
Elliott Reid...Prosecutor Tom Davenport
Paul Hartman...Deputy Horace Meeker (bailiff)
Philip Coolidge...Mayor Jason Carter
Noah Beery Jr....John Stebbins
Norman Fell...WGN Chicago Radio Broadcaster

Directed by Stanley Kramer
Original play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee
Screenplay by Nedrick Young Harold Jacob Smith
Produced by Stanley Kramer...producer
Cinematography by Ernest Laszlo

Spencer Bonaventure Tracy (from Wikipedia) (April 5, 1900, Milwaukee – June 10, 1967, Hollywood, diabetes-related heart attack) was an American film actor who appeared in 74 films from 1930 to 1967. He is often regarded as one of the finest actors in motion picture history.

He was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, the second son of John Edward Tracy, a hard-drinking Irish American Catholic truck salesman, and Caroline Brown, a Protestant turned Christian Scientist. Tracy's paternal grandparents, John Tracy and Mary Guhin, were born in Ireland. His mother's ancestry dates back to
Thomas Stebbins, who immigrated from England in the late 1630s. At the beginning of World War I, Tracy left school to enlist in the Navy, but remained in Norfolk Navy Yard, Virginia throughout the war. Afterward he attended Ripon College where he appeared in a play entitled The Truth, and decided on acting as a career. In the early 1920s he attended the Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York. For several years he performed in stock in Michigan, Canada, and Ohio. Finally in 1930 he appeared in a hit play on Broadway, The Last Mile.

In 1923 he married Louise Treadwell. They had two children, John and Louise (Susie). In 1930, director John Ford saw Tracy in the play The Last Mile and signed him to do Up the River for Fox Pictures. Shortly after that he and his family moved to Hollywood, where he made over 25 films in five years.

In 1935 Tracy signed with MGM. He won the Oscar for Best Actor two years in a row, for Captains Courageous (1937) and Boys Town (1938). He was also nominated for San Francisco (1936), Father of the Bride (1950), Bad Day at Black Rock (1955), The Old Man and the Sea (1958), Inherit the Wind (1960), Judgment at Nuremberg (1961), and Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (1967). He and Laurence Olivier share the record for the most best actor Oscar nominations (9).

In 1941 he began a relationship with Katharine Hepburn, whose agile mind and New England brogue complemented Tracy's easy working-class machismo very well. Though estranged from his wife Louise, he was a devout Catholic and never divorced. He and Hepburn made nine films together. Seventeen days after filming had completed on his last film, Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, with Hepburn, he died from a massive heart attack at the age of 67. He is interred in Forest Lawn Memorial Park Cemetery in Glendale, California.

More than thirty years after his death, Tracy is still widely considered one of the most skillful actors of his time. He could portray the hero, the villain, or the comedian, and make the audience believe he truly was the character he played. Tracy was one of Hollywood's earliest "realistic" actors; his performances have stood the test of time.

A new full length biography of Spencer Tracy is currently being written by James Curtis, author of the acclaimed 2003 biography of W.C. Fields.

**FREDERICK MARCH** (30 August 1897, Racine, WI—14 April 1975, Los Angeles, prostate cancer) from Leonard Maltin's Movie Encyclopedia: One of the finest actors who ever worked onscreen, Fredric March resisted typecasting by the studios-and, in fact, refused long-term contracts, hand-picking his roles with incredible success. The result was an exemplary film career. Bitten by the acting bug while studying economics in college, he participated in campus dramatics but followed through on his original plans and, after graduating, went to New York to work at the National City Bank. A brush with death (necessitating an emergency appendectomy) shocked him into abandoning the financial world in favor of an acting career. After working in bit roles for several years (during which time he also worked as an extra in New Yorkmade films, beginning with 1921's The Devil), he won his first Broadway lead in 1926. While touring with the Theatre Guild's first repertory troupe (accompanied by his new wife, actress Florence Eldridge), March landed a Paramount Pictures contract. He appeared in a number of early talkies-among them The Dummy, The Wild Party, The Studio Murder Mystery, Jealousy (all 1929), Sarah and Son, Paramount on Parade, True to the Navy, Manslaughter and Laughter (all 1930)—before achieving his first major success, repeating a role he'd performed on stage, broadly mimicking John Barrymore in the film adaptation of The Royal Family of Broadway (1930), and earning his first Oscar nomination in the process.

Following several routine assignments in 1931, March lobbied for and won the dual role in Rouben Mamoulian's production of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (released 1932), resulting in his best screen outing to date, which won him a Best Actor Academy Award. Today, his Mr. Hyde seems very much over the top, with March slobbering over his grotesque makeup and chewing whatever scenery hasn't been nailed down. Nonetheless, his phenomenal success in the part made him one of Hollywood's hottest tickets.

Still a relatively young man, March had the leading man's classic good looks, which served him well in Merrily We Go to Hell (1932), The Sign of the Cross (also 1932, memorable in this Cecil B. DeMille spectacular as a Roman officer won over to Christianity), Tonight Is Ours, The Eagle and the Hawk (both 1933), Design for Living (also 1933, particularly engaging in this sophisticated Noël Coward comedy), Death Takes a Holiday (another well remembered role, as the Grim Reaper himself), Good Dame, Affairs of Cellini (in the title role), The Barretts of Wimpole Street (as Robert Browning), We Live Again (all 1934), Les Miserables (as the persecuted Jean Valjean), Anna Karenina, The Dark Angel (all 1935), Anthony Adverse (in the title role), and The Road to Glory (both 1936).

Two David O. Selznick productions in 1937, both filmed in the then-novel threestrip Technicolor process, showed March to particularly good advantage: In A Star Is Born he was Oscar-nominated for the role of Norman Maine, a washed-up movie star whose career fades as his young wife's soars. In Nothing Sacred he played the conniving reporter who makes a media celebrity of Carole Lombard, who's mistakenly thought to be dying. Those roles, along with his starring stints as Jean Lafitte in DeMille's The Buccaneer and a debonair detective in Tay Garnett's Trade Winds (both 1938), elevated March to a lofty pinnacle reached by few other stars in the Hollywood of the 1930s.

March took fewer film assignments in the 1940s. Susan and God, Victory (both 1940), So Ends Our Night, One Foot in Heaven, Bedtime Story (all 1941), I Married a Witch (1942), The Adventures of Mark Twain and Tomorrow the World (both 1944) were, for the most part, worthy vehicles for the star, but none of them achieved the success of his best films of the preceding decade. A notable exception: the Academy Award-winning classic The Best Years of Our Lives (1946, a Goldwyn film directed by William Wyler), a nearly perfect production from every standpoint, offered March a strong role as a returning WW2 veteran; he won his second Oscar for the performance.

By this time March was working on Broadway as often as his schedule allowed, and after the war he chose his screen roles with even greater care. He starred in Another Part of the Forest, An Act of Murder (both 1948, in the latter with Eldridge), Christopher Columbus (1949, in the title role), Death of a Salesman (1951, as Arthur Miller's tired, tragic Willy Loman, for which he was Oscar-nominated), It's a Big Country (1952), Man on a Tightrope (1953), Executive Suite (1954), The Bridges at Toko-Ri (1954), The Desperate Hours (1955, effective as the put-upon paterfamilias), Alexander the Great, The Man in the Gray Flannel Suit (both 1956), and the touching Middle of the
**Night** (1959).

_Inherit the Wind_ (1960), Stanley Kramer's riveting filmization of the Jerome Lawrence-Robert E. Lee play about the Scopes "monkey trial," gave March his flashiest latter-day character part, that of the fiery orator based on William Jennings Bryan (opposite Spencer Tracy, whose character was modeled after Clarence Darrow), and marked his last screen appearance with Eldridge, who played his faithful wife. His final films included _The Young Doctors_ (1961), _The Condemned of Altona_ (1962), _Seven Days in May_ (1964, properly authoritative as a U.S. president), _Hombre_ (1967), _EB> _ (1969), and _The Iceman Cometh_ (1973, his last). Throughout the years he also lent his name, and talent, to worthy causes, and, with his wife, was a liberal activist in the Democratic party.

**Gene Kelly** (23 August 1912, Pittsburgh—2 February 1996, Beverly Hills, complications from two strokes) acted in 47 films and directed 12._Bio from Leonard Maltin’s Film Encyclopedia:_ “The enduring image of this handsome, robust performer gaily dancing to and crooning “Singin’ in the Rain” (in the classic 1952 film of the same name), one of the most frequently repeated sequences in movie history, shouldn’t obscure the other impressive achievements in his lengthy, generally distinguished career. A dancer since childhood, Kelly studied economics at Penn State and the University of Pittsburgh, but had the misfortune of graduating during the Depression and was forced to take menial jobs to support himself. At one time a dancing teacher, he finally parlayed his natural ability into a chorus-boy assignment on the Broadway stage. In 1940 he won the leading role in Rodgers and Hart's "Pal Joey," which catapulted him to stardom. During this period he also choreographed several hit plays, including the 1941 production of "Best Foot Forward." It was probably inevitable that Kelly should wind up in Hollywood, where the film musical had produced some of the screen's most popular players. Kelly's good looks, brawny physique, and vigorous, athletic dancing style set him apart from most male dancers, and while he lacked Fred Astaire's stylish elegance, he more than made up for it with his own ebullience and winning personality. Paired with Judy Garland in _For Me and My Gal_ (1942), he got off to a fine start, making a hit with audiences and eliciting favorable reviews. Kelly spent most of his film career at MGM, home of the fabled Arthur Freed unit, which produced Hollywood's finest musicals.... _In Anchors Aweigh_ (1945) he and choreographic partner Stanley Donen concocted a brilliant and innovative dance sequence with the animated Jerry the Mouse. (The musical also earned Kelly a Best Actor Oscar nomination, and marked the first of three screen teamings with Frank Sinatra, whom he taught to dance.) Ziegfeld Follies (1946) teamed him with Fred Astaire for the amusing "Babbitt and the Bromide" number. _Words and Music_ (1948), a dubious biography of songwriters Rodgers and Hart, enabled him to make a guest appearance performing an impressive rendition of Rodgers' "Slaughter on 10th Avenue" ballet. _The Pirate_ (1948) teamed him with Judy Garland in a particularly exuberant musical, and _The Three Musketeers_ (also 1948) allowed Kelly, as D'Artagnan, to use his graceful body movements in a nonmusical swashbuckler. _Take Me Out to the Ball Game_ (1949), a modestly entertaining baseball musical, gave Kelly and Donen screen credit for contributing the picture's storyline. Only _Living in a Big Way_ (1947), a notorious flop about postwar reacclimation, marred Kelly's late 1940s winning streak. Kelly and Donen earned their director's stripes with _On the Town_ (1949), the wonderful Betty Comden-Adolph Green-Leonard Bernstein musical about sailors on leave in New York, New York, in which Kelly also starred. Among its other distinctions was the fact that this musical left the confines of a Hollywood studio and filmed its exteriors on location. After making _Summer Stock_ (1950) with former costar Judy Garland, Kelly took a dramatic role in that year's _Black Hand_ which cast the dark-haired performer as an Italian-American crimebuster. Although directed by Vincente Minnelli, _An American in Paris_ (1951) bore Kelly's mark just as strongly. (He is a lifelong Francophile.) His singing and dancing were never better showcased, and the lengthy Gershwin ballet that climaxes the film is one of the highpoints of Kelly's career. It earned him a special Academy Award that year. He took a supporting part in an all-star, picaresque drama, _It's a Big Country_ (also 1951) before joining forces with Donen for _Singin' in the Rain_ (1952), arguably the finest movie musical of all time, and a delightful spoof of Hollywood's chaotic transition from silent films to sound. Supported by Donald O'Connor and Debbie Reynolds, Kelly the Actor turned in one of his best performances, while Kelly the Dancer/Choreographer provided inventive terpsichore and Kelly the Codirector contributed dynamic staging. With this one film he reached the apogee of his career. Kelly went dramatic again in _The Devil Makes Three_ (1952), and then had to face the fact that MGM was scaling back on the production of lavish musicals. Lerner and Loewe's _Brigadoon_ (1954), directed by Minnelli, was supposed to have been filmed in Scotland, but budget cutbacks kept it on a soundstage instead. Although quite entertaining it was not the film Kelly had hoped for. He persuaded MGM to let him make _Invitation to the Dance_ (1957, but filmed years earlier), but this earnest, ambitious episodic dance musical was not a great success artistically or financially. _Les Girls_ (also 1957) was Kelly's last starring musical, a pleasant soufflé with Cole Porter songs and George Cukor direction. (Kelly did make an amusing cameo as Yves Montand's dancing coach in 1960's _Let's Make Love_ and appeared in Jacques Demy's French-made homage to the Hollywood musical, _The Young Girls of Rochefort_ in 1968, though his singing voice was incredibly dubbed in the French-language version. But his singing and dancing, for the most part, was confined to television from the 1960s on.) Acting had never been Kelly's strongest suit, but he was tailor-made for the part of a charming heel in _Marjorie Morningstar_ (1958). He was less ideal in the role of a cynical reporter, inspired by H. L. Mencken, in _Inherit the Wind_ (1960). By this time Kelly was content to spend most of his time behind the camera. He directed _The Happy Road_ (1957, in which he also starred), _The Tunnel of Love_ (1958), Jackie Gleason's pantomime vehicle _Gigot_ (1962), a 1965 telefilm remake of _Woman of the Year_ the all-star comedy _A Guide for the Married Man_ (1967), the overstuffed musical _Hello, Dolly!_ (1969), and _The Cheyenne Social Club_ (1970)...." He won an Honorary Academy in 1952, and in 1985 the American Film Institute gave him its Life Achievement Award

_from World Film Directors Vol II._ Ed John Wakeman. H. H. Wilson Co. NY 1988

American director, producer, and scenarist, Stanley Kramer was born into a family that had some movie connections, albeit on the distribution side of the industry. He attended DeWitt High School in the Bronx and went on to New York University, where he sometimes wrote for _The Medley_, the college humor magazine. Kramer graduated with a B.S. in 1933, in the depths of the
Depression, and went out to Hollywood to write movies. It took him awhile to realize this extravagant ambition, but he did land a $18-a-week job shifting scenery and such with a “swing gang.”

The following year Kramer joined MGM’s research department, from there making his way into the cutting department. It was during his three years as an apprentice editor and editor that he learned the rudiments of filmmaking—all that he ever did learn according to his numerous hostile critics. He is said to have shown exceptional aptitude as a cutter, acquiring a sense of structure that later enabled him to edit his own films “in the camera” with minimal wastage.

Kramer left MGM when he sold his first script—an original story—to Columbia. He followed it to that studio, becoming a member of Columbia’s script department, and then moved on again to work in the same capacity for Republic.

Between studio assignments, Kramer also wrote for radio...

During World War II, Kramer made training and orientation films for the Signal Corps, emerging as a first lieutenant. Afterwards, instead of returning to MGM, he formed his own production company and bought the rights to Taylor Caldwell’s bestselling novel This Side of Innocence. Production delays forced Kramer to sell his interest in this package, and in May 1947 in together with Carl Foreman and others, he established Screen Plays Inc. And acquired the rights to the stories of Ring Lardner. United Artists were persuaded to handle distribution, and Kramer drummed up backing for his first independent film as producer, So This is New York (1948). Based on Lardner’s The Bog Town, and directed by Richard Fleischer, it was a comedy starring the radio actor Henry Morgan.

Like most independent low-budget productions, So This is New York failed at the box office and disappeared without making a ripple on the glossy surface of the industry. Kramer tried again with a very different Lardner story about an ambitious and unscrupulous boxer. Scripted by Carl Foreman (like most of Kramer’s early productions) it was tailored to the talents of Kirk Douglas, an ex-wrestler who was just beginning to make a name for himself as a movie actor. Kramer—whose gift for recognizing talent has been only grudgingly acknowledged—also cast two struggling actresses, Ruth Roman and Lola Albright, and entrusted the direction to Mark Robson, formerly confined to B-movies.

Champion (1949), made in twenty-three days on a budget of $590,000, emerged as an intense and exciting antiboxing drama with a tour de force performance from Douglas as the ruthless egomaniac of the title. It brought immediate (if in some cases brief) stardom to Douglas, Roman, and Albright, launched Mark Robson’s career as an important director, and was an immense box-office success. The film’s editor, Harry Gerstad, received an Academy Award, and there were Oscar nominations for Kirk Douglas, Arthur Kennedy, Carl Foreman, and the photographer Franz Planer.

Having found his metier, Kramer followed Champion with a string of films dealing with contemporary social problems, made on low budgets and mostly without star names. Most of them, as Pauline Kael says, “were melodramas with ...redeeming social importance; and if their messages were often irritantly self-righteous, the situations and settings were, nevertheless, excitingly modern, relevant.”

Robson’s second picture for Kramer was Home of the Brave (1949), adapted from Arthur Laurent’s play about anti-Semitism, but now dealing with the persecution of a black soldier by his white “comrades.” It was an even bigger hit than Champion. The producer the launched Stanley Kramer Productions Inc. and continued his triumphal progress with The Men (1950), a drama about paraplegic war veterans, teaming a director whose career had been quietly fading, Fred Zinnemann, with Marlon Brando in his first screen role. Cyrano de Bergerac (1950), a holiday from contemporary tracts, brought stardom and an Oscar to José Ferrer, and was followed by Laslo Benedek’s screen version of Arthur Miller’s Death of a Salesman, with Frederic March as Willy Loman, and then by Hugo Fregonese’s My Six Convicts.

In 1952 Kramer hired Edward Dmytryk, a newly rehabilitated member of the blacklist Hollywood Ten, to direct The Sniper, an unusually humane film about a young psychopath. This remarkable series of movies ended with the best of them, High Noon (1952), directed by Zinnemann and starring the aging Gary Cooper. It won four Oscars and has been variously claimed as an allegory about McCarthyism and “the greatest Western ever made.”

For many critics, the films he made as an independent producer between 1949 and 1952 were Kramer’s finest achievements—an almost impossible demonstration that it was still possible for a person of ability, imagination, and determination to break the stranglehold of the big studios, and that without compromising his humanitarian principles. Kramer was adulated on all sides as the “conscience” of the American film industry, and perhaps its redeemer. But although Kramer had produced eight notable and mostly successful pictures in less than four years, his financial base was apparently still too uncertain to allow him to go on alone. In 1951 his production unit became the Stanley Kramer Company, working under the banner of Columbia, and committed to produce thirty movies in five years.

Kramer’s independence was supposed to remain absolute under the new arrangement but evidently it did not. The films he oversaw for Columbia were glossier and more expensive in casting and “production values” and closer in content and finish to other big-studio productions, generally lacking the do-it-yourself excitement of his earlier movies. David Thompson wrote with only slight exaggeration that there was “not a good film in the lot.”

All of them lost money except The Caine Mutiny....Although Kramer had completed less than a third of the thirty films he had contracted to make for Columbia, he and the studio agreed to part company.... The Defiant Ones (1958) was a different matter, and is regarded by most critics as the best film Kramer has directed. It is a powerful parable about the escape and pursuit of two convicts in the Deep South, one black and one white. The ordeals and terrors of the manhunt are compounded by the fact that the white man (Tony Curtis) is an ignorant young racist; the black (Sidney Poitier) is a good man made violent by injustice. The latter wants to head north, away from the desperately real danger of lynching; the white man wants to hole up in the South, where he knows the country and the people. But they are shackled together, first by a length of chain, then by a dawning sense of their brotherhood in suffering and fear....

Kramer’s apotheosis in the eyes of more biddable commentators came when he tackled the problem of The Bomb itself. On the Beach (1959), adapted by John Paxton from Nevil Shute’s novel, takes place in what was then the near future, 1964.
World War III has obliterated the Northern Hemisphere and clouds of irradiated dust are being carried towards Australia, where the inhabitants of Melbourne have five months in which to pursue vain hopes of a reprieve and, when these fail, to prepare for the end. The all-star cast includes an American submarine commander (Gregory Peck), a fading beauty who drowns her compassion for the dying world in brandy (Ava Gardner), a disillusioned scientist with a taste for terminal auto racing (Fred Astaire), and a young Australian naval attaché (Anthony Perkins) at odds with his wife over suicide. The cameraman, neorealist Giuseppe Rotunno, managed to subdue the refinement of this cast with grainy black and white; the documentary look is particularly effective in the eerie, highly evocative studies of depopulated cities.

“It may be,” Linus Pauling thought, “that some years from now we can look back and say that On the Beach is the movie that saved the world.”

Inherit the Wind (1960), adapted from a stage play, is a somewhat fictionalized account of the 1925 “monkey trial” in Dayton, Tennessee. The defendant was John Thomas Scopes, a young schoolteacher accused of offending against a Tennessee statute that forbade the teaching of Darwinian theories of evolution. The case developed into a famous battle of legal giants between the greatest trial lawyer of the day, the agnostic rationalist Clarence Darrow, and the fundamentalist William Jennings Bryan, a formidable political orator of the old school.

Spencer Tracy played the Darrow character and Frederic March the ailing Bryan (both given fictitious names in the film), and both delivered virtuoso performances. The “magnetic contest” between those two takes place in a sweltering Tennessee courtroom where both judge and jury are impregnably prejudiced against Darwin. The film is undeniably dramatic and entertaining, but angered some critics because all the cards are stacked in favor of Darrow and the rationalist minority and against the fundamentalists, who as Time’s reviewer wrote were “wildly and unjustly” caricatured. It seemed to Derek Prouse that “one is ensnared from the outset in a plush seat of moral superiority; one is flattered, never pricked.”

Another courtroom drama followed, involving equally massive issues—the three-hour Judgment at Nuremberg (1961), scripted by Abby Mann from his own television play. Spencer Tracy gave another performance of rugged honesty as a Maine judge sent in 1948 to preside over the second series of Nazi war crime trials. Burt Lancaster plays a once eminent German jurist, Richard Widmark the American military prosecutor, and Maximilian Schell the lawyer who flamboyantly defends the four judges on trial. Judy Garland and Montgomery Clift also appear, representing the shattered victims of the accused, and Marlene Dietrich is the unregenerate widow of a Nazi general....Hollis Alpert wrote that “Stanley Kramer has once again used film importantly” and “continues to emerge as the only truly responsible moviemaker in Hollywood.” Arthur Knight admitted that in Kramer’s earlier films “there was always the nagging suspicion that ...[Kramer’s] dream might have been better served by more sensitive, less forthright direction,” but went on to say that here, “from first to last, the director is in command of his material...he has not only added hugely to his stature as a producer-director, but to the stature of American film as well.”

...Penelope Gilliatt found the picture “a very laborious work,” even though “it is the sort of film that is indulgently assumed to be serious because of its subject: She maintained that the courtroom scenes fabricate “a clash that is really heavily rigged,” that the film draws “fairly cheaply” on the Belsen newsreels, and that the editing “has the subtlety of a ton of bricks.”

...John Russell Taylor has pointed out that Kramer’s films “assemble every possible guarantee of success in the way of stellar casts and, whatever the critics may say about them, seem almost infallibly to work like the proverbial machine for making money.” This was certainly the case with Guess Who’s Coming to Dinner (1967), said to have been one of the most profitable movies ever made.

In the face of such lethal notices [for his later films] it is startling to recall that twenty years earlier Kramer was one of the most adulated directors in America, his films loaded with honors and blessed by almost automatic commercial success. The recent hostility of the critical establishment is no doubt to some extent a reaction against the excessive praise that greeted Kramer’s earlier work, and Andrew Sarris once admitted that he had submitted the director to “overabuse,” confessing that “if Kramer were not so vulnerable in his sincerity, he would not have made such a tempting target.”

All the same, Sarris went on, Kramer is “simply not a good director. He lacks the intuitive feel for the medium, the instinctively kinetic insight into dramatic materials. He does everything by the numbers, and the lumbering machinery of his technique is always in full view of the audience.” And David Denby wrote in 1970 that “Kramer’s ambitions and his failures have often been linked to a kind of muddled and opportunistic liberalism whose qualities in the arts can be indicated by a list of its compromises: it’s quick and easy with judgments and moral categories but incapable of imagining the experience of evil, the contradictions of virtue, the dangers of the moral life in general; it sincerely dislikes prejudice but defends the victims of prejudice by cleaning and sprucing them to the point where their antagonists look reassuringly insane; it praises variety and diversity but feels comfortable only with an overall scaling down and flattening of human strangeness, wildness, and complexity; it has explanations for everything but is constantly being surprised.”...

Kramer retired from the film industry after The Runner Stumbles (1979) and moved to Seattle, where he taught at the University of Washington and at Bellevue Community College. He also hosted a local television program and contributed a weekly column “on everything” to the Seattle Times. “I felt that after being half a step ahead for many years, I was suddenly half a step behind. This helped me catch up again.” Then in the spring of 1987 he was asked by David Putnam, president of Columbia Pictures, to return to Hollywood to develop new projects for the studio. “I don’t believe films change anyone’s mind,” Kramer said, “but I was spawned during the Roosevelt era, a time of great change, and I still believe in trying to get people to think.”

Inherit the Wind (1960), by Roger Ebert / January 28, 2006

“History repeats itself, the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.”—Karl Marx

This statement by Karl Marx admirably serves two functions: (1) it describes the difference between the two times the teaching of Darwin’s theories were put on trial in this country, in
What is surprising, as I watch “Inherit the Wind,” is how clearly ignorance and breathtaking inanity and lied out right under their name as if they were politicians in the land with courage of American teenagers believe “God created humans pretty much in their present form within the last 10,000 years or so,” and 54 percent of American adults doubt that man evolved from earlier species. There is hardly a politician in the land with courage enough to state that they are wrong.

...What is astonishing in this 1960 film is the gutsy way it engages in ideas, pulls no punches in its language, and allows the characters long and impassioned speeches. There are a lot of words here, well-written and spoken, and not condescending to the audience. Both Tracy and March vent an anger and passion through their characters that ventures beyond acting into holy zeal.

I wonder if a film made today would have the nerve to question fundamentalism as bluntly as the Tracy character does. The beliefs he argues against have crept back into view as “creationist science,” and it was the notion that this should be offered as an alternative to Darwinism that inspired the 2005 Pennsylvania case. In the movie and in the actual Scopes trial, Bryan was a persuasive orator who proudly defended fundamentalism; his 2005 counterparts carefully distanced themselves from religious advocacy and tried to make their case on the basis of “creationist science.” Their presentation was so unpersuasive that Judge John E. Jones III (a Republican appointed by George W. Bush) not only ruled against them but added that they exhibited “striking ignorance” and “breathtaking inanity” and “lied outright under oath.”

...What is surprising, as I watch “Inherit the Wind,” is how clearly
upon the map. But how now?

Today, with the curtain barely rung up and the worst buffooneries to come, it is obvious to even town boomers that getting upon the map, like patriotism, is not enough. The getting there must be managed discreetly, adroitly, with careful regard to psychological niceties. The boomers of Dayton, alas, had no skill at such things, and the experts they called in were all quacks. The result now turns the communal liver to water. Two months ago the town was obscure and happy. Today it is a universal joke.

I have been attending the permanent town meeting that goes on in Robinson's drug store, trying to find out what the town optimists have saved from the wreck. All I can find is a sort of mystical confidence that God will somehow come to the rescue to reward His old and faithful partisans as they deserve--that good will flow eventually out of what now seems to be heavily evil. More specifically, it is believed that settlers will be attracted to the town as to some refuge from the atheism of the great urban Sodoms and Gomorrhas.

But will these refugees bring any money with them? Will they buy lots and build houses? Will they light the fires of the cold and silent blast furnace down the railroad tracks? On these points, I regret to report, optimism has to call in theology to aid it. Prayer can accomplish a lot. It can cure diabetes, find lost pocketbooks and retain husbands from beating their wives. But is prayer made any more officious by giving a circus first? Coming to this thought, Dayton begins to sweat.

The town, I confess, greatly surprised me. I expected to find a squalid Southern village, with darkies snoozing on the horse blocks, pigs rooting under the houses and the inhabitants full of hookworm and malaria. What I found was a country town of charm and even beauty....

July 10 (the first day)
The town boomers have banqueted Darrow as well as Bryan, but there is no mistaking which of the two has the crowd, which means the venire of tried and true men. Bryan has been oozing around the country since his first day here, addressing this organization and that, presenting the indubitable Word of God in his caressing, ingratiating way, and so making unanimity doubly unanimous. From the defense yesterday came hints that he was making hay before the sun had legally begun to shine—even that it was a sort of contempt of court. But no Daytonian believes anything of the sort. What Bryan says doesn't seem to these congenial Baptists and Methodists to be argument; it seems to be a mere graceful statement to the obvious....

July 13 (the second day)
It would be hard to imagine a more moral town than Dayton. If it has any bootleggers, no visitor has heard of them. Ten minutes after I arrived a leading citizen offered me a drink made up half of white mule and half of coca cola, but he seems to have been simply indulging himself in a naughty gesture. No fancy woman has been seen in the town since the end of the McKinley administration. There is no gambling. There is no place to dance. The relatively wicked, when they would indulge themselves, go to Robinson's drug store and debate theology....

July 14 (the third day)
The net effect of Clarence Darrow's great speech yesterday seems to be precisely the same as if he had bawled it up a rainspout in the interior of Afghanistan. That is, locally, upon the process against the infidel Scopes, upon the so-called minds of these fundamentalists of upland Tennessee. You have but a dim notice of it who have only read it. It was not designed for reading, but for hearing. The clangtint of it was as important as the logic. It rose like a wind and ended like a flourish of bugles. The very judge on the bench, toward the end of it, began to look uneasy. But the morons in the audience, when it was over, simply hissed it.

During the whole time of its delivery the old mountebank, Bryan, sat tight-lipped and unmoved. There is, of course, no reason why it should have shaken him. He has these hillbillies locked up in his pen and he knows it. His brand is on them. He is at home among them. Since his earliest days, indeed, his chief strength has been among the folk of remote hills and forlorn and lonely farms. Now with his political aspirations all gone to pot, he turns to them for religious consolations. They understand his peculiar imbecilities. His nonsense is their ideal of sense. When he deluges them with his theologic bilge they rejoice like pilgrims dispersing in the river Jordan....

July 15 (the fourth day)
A preacher of any sect that admit the literal authenticity of Genesis is free to gather a crowd at any time and talk all he wants. More, he may engage in a dispute with any expert. I have heard at least a hundred such discussions, and some of them have been very acrimonious. But the instant a speaker utters a word against divine revelation he begins to disturb the peace and is liable to immediate arrest and confinement in the calaboose beside the railroad tracks...

July 16 (the fifth day)
In view of the fact that everyone here looks for the jury to bring in a verdict of guilty, it might be expected that the prosecution would show a considerable amiability and allow the defense a rather free play. Instead, it is contesting every point very vigorously and taking every advantage of its greatly superior familiarity with local procedure. There is, in fact, a considerable heat in the trial. Bryan and the local lawyers for the State sit glaring at the defense all day and even the Attorney-General, A. T. Stewart, who is supposed to have secret doubts about fundamentalism, has shown such pugnacity that it has already brought him to forced apologies.

The high point of yesterday's proceedings was reached with the appearance of Dr. Maynard M. Metcalf of the John Hopkins. The doctor is a somewhat chubby man of bland mien, and during the first part of his testimony, with the jury present, the prosecution apparently viewed his with great equanimity. But the instant he was asked a question bearing directly upon the case at bar there was a flurry in the Bryan pen and Stewart was on his feet with protests. Another question followed, with more and hotter protests. The judge then excluded the jury and the show began.

What ensued was, on the surface, a harmless enough dialogue between Dr. Metcalf and Darrow, but underneath there was tense drama. At the first question Bryan came out from behind the State's table and planted himself directly in front of Dr. Metcalf, and not ten feet away. The two McKenzies followed, with young Sue Hicks at their heels.

Then began one of the clearest, most succinct and withal most eloquent presentations of the case for the evolutionists that I have ever heard. The doctor was never at a loss for a word, and his ideas flowed freely and smoothly. Darrow steered him...
magnificently. A word or two and he was howling down the wind. Another and he hauled up to discharge a broadside. There was no cocksureness in him. Instead he was rather cautious and depreciatory and sometimes he halted and confessed his ignorance. But what he got over before he finished was a superb counterblast to the fundamentalist buncombe. The jury, at least, in theory heard nothing of it, but it went whooping into the radio and it went banging into the face of Bryan....

This old buzzard, having failed to raise the mob against its rulers, now prepares to raise it against its teachers. He can never be the peasants’ President, but there is still a chance to be the peasants’ Pope. He leads a new crusade, his bald head glistening, his face streaming with sweat, his chest heaving beneath his rumpled alpaca coat. One somehow pities him, despite his so palpable imbecilities. It is a tragedy, indeed, to begin life as a hero and to end it as a buffoon. But let no one, laughing at him, underestimate the magic that lies in his black, malignant eye, his frayed but still eloquent voice. He can shake and inflame these poor ignoramuses as no other man among us can shake and inflame them, and he is desperately eager to order the charge.

In Tennessee he is drilling his army. The big battles, he believes, will be fought elsewhere.

July 18

All that remains of the great cause of the State of Tennessee against the infidel Scopes is the formal business of bumping off the defendant. There may be some legal jousting on Monday and some gaudy oratory on Tuesday, but the main battle is over, with Genesis completely triumphant. Judge Raulston finished the benign business yesterday morning by leaping with soft judicial hosannas into the arms of the prosecution. The sole commentary of the sardonic Darrow consisted of bringing down a metaphorical custard pie upon the occiput of the learned jurist.

"I hope," said the latter nervously, "that counsel intends no reflection upon this court."

Darrow hunched his shoulders and looked out of the window dreamily.

"Your honor," he said, "is, of course, entitled to hope."...

The Scopes trial, from the start, has been carried on in a manner exactly fitted to the anti-evolution law and the simian imbecility under it. There hasn't been the slightest pretense to decorum. The rustic judge, a candidate for re-election, has postured the yokels like a clown in a ten-cent side show, and almost every word he has uttered has been an undisguised appeal to their prejudices and superstitions. The chief prosecuting attorney, beginning like a competent lawyer and a man of self-respect, ended like a convert at a Billy Sunday revival. It fell to him, finally, to make a clear and astounding statement of theory of justice prevailing under fundamentalism. What he said, in brief, was that a man accused of infidelity had no rights whatever under Tennessee law...

Darrow has lost this case. It was lost long before he came to Dayton. But it seems to me that he has nevertheless performed a great public service by fighting it to a finish and in a perfectly serious way. Let no one mistake it for comedy, farcical though it may be in all its details. It serves notice on the country that Neanderthal man is organizing in these forlorn backwaters of the land, led by a fanatic, rid of sense and devoid of conscience. Tennessee, challenging him too timorously and too late, now sees its courts converted into camp meetings and its Bill of Rights made a mock of by its sworn officers of the law. There are other States that had better look to their arsenals before the Hun is at their gates.

**Coming up in the Buffalo Film Seminars XII, Spring 2006**

Feb 21 Gillo Pontecorvo *The Battle of Algiers* 1965  
Feb 28 John Boorman *Point Blank* 1967  
Mar 7 Fred Zinneman *A Man for All Seasons* 1966  
Mar 21 Robert Bresson *Au hasard Balthazar* 1966  
Mar 28 Richard Brooks *In Cold Blood* 1967  
Apr 4 Ousmane Sembene *Xala* 1974  
Apr 11 Wim Wenders *Wings of Desire* 1987  
Apr 18 Andre Konchalovsky *Runaway Train* 1985  

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**The Buffalo Film Seminars are presented by the Market Arcade Film & Arts Center & University at Buffalo**

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...for the series schedule, annotations, links and updates: http://buffalofilmseminars.com 
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