



RICH PIECES

B R O A D W A Y

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

Old Hollywood: Tough Guys and Mad Dames

Rich Johnson

Week 5

IDA LUPINO: RENAISSANCE WOMAN

Ida Lupino (4 February 1918 – 3 August 1995) was not only a British Hollywood movie star but also one of few women in the town who had crossed over into becoming a writer, producer and director. A *true* renaissance woman, Lupino was dubbed “the last of Hollywood’s rugged individualists,” her family name often associated with the *dramatic*. This began with a banished nobleman from Bologna during the early 17th century who fled to England where, under the name of Georgius, survived as a roaming puppeteer and fathered a theatrical dynasty. In the centuries that followed, another Lupino was famous for performing a record 210 pirouettes on a handkerchief, while another originated the role of Nana the dog in *Peter Pan*. It is no surprise in reading these stories that the family’s symbol was a red-hot poker, inspired by their noted ability to fire up an audience. As one of the few female directors of the Golden Age, Ida would go on to direct everything from noir *The Hitch-Hiker* to episodes of *Bewitched* and *The Twilight Zone*. As a *movie star* she was somewhat overlooked but as a filmmaker became a groundbreaking talent.

Please refer to the reading list for a full reference of films.

Main:

Out of the Fog (1941)

Director(s): Anatole Litvak

Studio(s): Warner Bros. / First National Pictures

On Dangerous Ground (1951)

Director(s): Nicholas Ray

Studio(s): RKO Radio Pictures

The Bigamist (1953)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmakers



RICH PIECES

B R O A D W A Y

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

References to:

The Love Race (1931)

Director(s): Lupino Lane, Pat Morton

Studio(s): British International Pictures

The Ghost Camera (1933)

Director(s): Bernard Vorhaus

Studio(s): Twickenham Studios / Real Art Productions

I Lived With You (1933)

Director(s): Maurice Elvey

Studio(s): British International Pictures

Search for Beauty (1934)

Director(s): Erle C. Kenton

Studio(s): *Paramount Pictures*

Smart Girl (1934)

Director(s): Aubrey Scotto

Studio(s): Paramount Pictures

High Sierra (1940)

Director(s): Raoul Walsh

Studio(s): Warner Bros.

Not Wanted (1949)

Director(s): Elmer Clifton, Ida Lupino (uncredited)

Studio(s): Emerald Productions Inc.

Never Fear (1950)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmmakers

Outrage (1950)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmmakers Inc. (distributed by RKO Radio Pictures)

The Hitch-Hiker (1953)

Director(s): Ida Lupino

Studio(s): The Filmmakers Inc. / RKO Radio Pictures

The Big Knife (1955)

Director(s): Robert Aldrich

Studio(s): The Associates & Aldrich Company (distributed by United Artists)



RICH PIECES

B R O A D W A Y

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

***The Twilight Zone* season 1, episode 4 "The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine" (1959)**

Director(s): Mitchell Leisen

Studio(s): Columbia Pictures

***The Twilight Zone* season 5, episode 25 "The Masks" (1964)**

Director(s): Mark Robson

Studio(s): Columbia Pictures

***My Boys Are Good Boys* (1979)**

Director(s): Bethel Buckalew

Studio(s): Peter Perry Productions

Notes:

"I had no desire to crash a man's world." — Ida Lupino

Ida Lupino was born in London on February 4th 1918. Far from the typical 'drama queen' and skirting around the label of 'movie star', her reputation as a renaissance woman and leader of women behind the camera is an inspiration. Not only was she respected as an actress and director but was also involved in writing and producing. Throughout her 48-year career, she appeared in 59 films and directed eight, working primarily in the United States, where she became a citizen in 1948.

What is most fascinating is her lineage. Ida came from a family of performers who began their career in the 1800s gaining a reputation as 'the theatrical Lupino family'. However, the family originates from 'Luppino' and 'Hook' family whose reputation in the arts dates back even further to the 1600s beginning with puppet makers:

Both her parents were actors, her mother Connie O'Shea (also known as Connie Emerald) and the music hall comedian Stanley Lupino, which also included second cousin, Lupino Lane who was known as a song-and-dance man. It began with her great-grandfather, George Hook, who changed his name to Lupino.

It is no surprise born into the family that she was encourage from an early age to act, her father writing plays for her to perform. In her heart she wanted to be a writer, but to please her father, Lupino enrolled in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

What is most fascinating is her lineage. Ida came from a family of performers who began their career in the 1800s gaining a reputation as 'the theatrical Lupino family'. However, the family originates from 'Luppino' and 'Hook' family whose reputation in the arts dates back even further to the 1600s beginning with puppet makers:

- Giorgio Luppino came from a family of Italian puppet makers. He fled to England as a political refugee
- George William Luppino (1632–1693), son of Georgius, a singer, reciter and puppet master.



RICH PIECES

BROADWAY

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

- George Charles Luppino (1662-1???), son of George William, a performer and puppeteer from age of 8.
- George Charles Luppino II (1683–1723), son of George Charles, a dancer, known as The Motion Master of Long Acre. He married Charlotte Mary Estcourt, daughter of the actor and playwright Richard Estcourt.
- George Richard Estcourt Luppino (1710–1787), son of George Charles, a dancer, an apprentice to John Rich, the founder of English Pantomime. He married Rosina Volante, daughter of the rope-dancer and theatre company manager Signora Violante.
- Thomas Frederick Luppino (1749–1845), son of George Richard Estcourt, a dancer and scenic artist. He married Elizabeth.
- Samuel George Lupino (1766–1830), son of Thomas Frederick, an acrobatic dancer.

Unrelated dancer George Hook (George Hook Lupino, 1820–1902) assumed the surname Lupino after working with members of the Lupino family. He became famous in the role of Harlequin and married Rosina Sophia Proctor (1831–1908) and had 16 children, at least 10 of whom became professional dancers, two of them marrying into the family of Sara Lane, manager of the Britannia Theatre Hoxton.

Of George Hook Lupino's 16 children:

- George Lupino (1853–1932), performed in Drury Lane pantomimes of the 1890s, with Dan Leno and was the father of George Barry (Barry) Lupino (1884–1962), Mark Lupino (1889–1930) and Vaudeville performer, actor, and writer Stanley Lupino (1893–1942) (father of Ida)
- Arthur Lupino (1864–1908) Animal impersonator. First to play the role of Nana in Peter Pan in 1904
- Harry Charles Lupino (1867–1925), married into the Lane family and was the father of Lupino Lane (Henry William George Lupino, 1892–1959) and Wallace Lupino (1898–1961).

Both her parents were actors, her mother Connie O'Shea (also known as Connie Emerald) and the music hall comedian Stanley Lupino, which also included second cousin, Lupino Lane who was known as a song-and-dance man. It began with her great-grandfather, George Hook, who changed his name to Lupino.

It is no surprise born into the family that she was encourage from an early age to act, her father writing plays for her to perform. In her heart she wanted to be a writer, but to please her father, Lupino enrolled in the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

Harry Lupino and his son Lupino Lane, in *Jack and Jill*, 1907–8 at The Prince's Bristol.

Family photographs of Ida are rare, but there are plenty of family members, even performing during their day. Another relative, Ida Lupino's great aunt, was known as Sarah Lane 'The Queen of Hoxton' who was also an actress, playwright and theatre manager in the UK during the 19th century. Most of the family adopted the surname Lane from Sarah.



RICH PIECES

BROADWAY

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

Young Ida

As mentioned, photos are rare of Ida as a child, with some photos shown on [This is Your Life](#) from the 1960s.

First appearances

She made her first film appearance on screen at the age of 12 in *The Love Race* (1931) starring her father Stanley Lupino.

As with most actresses during the 1930s, she emulated the Hollywood style, dying her hair blonde. Typically, she tended to resemble a lot of other actresses of the time. Hence, dubbed the 'British Gene Harlow'. But there was a fierce streak bubbling underneath.

After her debut a big-screen break came courtesy of director Allan Dwan casting her in his 1932 film *Her First Affaire*. This was shot at Warner Bros' British studios at Teddington and a slew of films followed, with five more shot back-to-back in 1933 at the studio. These included: *The Ghost Camera* and *I Lived with You*.

Her first Hollywood film was *Search for Beauty* (1934) for Paramount Pictures. *Smart Girl*, unlike *Search for Beauty* and *Paris in Spring*, was decidedly a B picture for Paramount, but Ida Lupino did receive star billing. She excelled in a number of 'bad girl' film roles (often playing prostitutes) and, therefore, did not enjoy being an actress and felt uncomfortable with many of these roles, not helped by the fact she always felt pushed into the profession due to her family history.

In 1934 she contracted polio, film magazines from the 1930s through the 1940s – such as *The Hollywood Reporter* and *Motion Picture Daily* – frequently publishing updates on her condition. Due to the illness and impact on her life she worked for various nonprofit organisations to raise funds for polio research.

Ditching the blonde

By the 1940s, Ida has dropped the blonde bombshell look, opting for the brunette which she sticks with.

She was married three times: Louis Hayward (m. 1938; div. 1945), producer and writer Collier Young (m. 1948; div. 1951) and Howard Duff (m. 1951; div. 1984) who she had been having an affair with and falling pregnant. She and Howard Duff welcomed their daughter Bridget Duff on April 23, 1952. She was Lupino's only child. She and Duff separated in 1966 but didn't divorce until 1983

Ms. Independent

As briefly mentioned, the most notable point about Ida Lupino is how important she is as one of few females working behind the camera. In fact, she became Hollywood's first credited female director since the retirement of Dorothy Arzner in 1943.



RICH PIECES

BROADWAY

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

Lupino, Azner and Alice Guy-Blaché the most important trio of female filmmakers that set the standard.

Lupino, Azner (*Dance, Girl, Dance*, 1940) and Alice Guy-Blaché (a pioneers of film from its early beginnings) are the most important trio of female filmmakers that set a standard, but, unfortunately never made the important changes in a male dominated industry.

With a hand in the writing, although not credited, she directed alongside Elmar Clifton on the 1949 film *Not Wanted*. This was due to Clifton suffering a heart attack soon after production began which meant Ida directed the film almost in its entirety. As the producer, however, Lupino generously gave Clifton the sole directing credit.

As with a lot of headstrong female stars of the era, Ida Lupino often got on the wrong side of the studio bosses. Jack Warner, in particular, often objected to her casting. As alluded to already, she would also refuse poorly written roles that she felt were beneath her dignity as an actress, even making script revisions that the studio saw as unacceptable behaviour. When she rejected to star alongside Ronald Reagan in the film *Kings Row* (1942) she was suspended and when she returned created a strained relationship with Warner Bros.

Her first credit as director was for *Never Fear* (1950) which she co-wrote with Collier Young. Having contracted polio in 1934 she suffered the same fevers and pains of never walking again, as Carol Williams' character does in the film.

However, while on suspension, she began to study the filmmaking processes including editing and realised, in her own words, "someone else seemed to be doing all the interesting work". She went on to start up her own independent production company, Filmmakers with her second husband, Collier Young, aimed at producing smaller low-budget "issue-oriented films". With this approach in mind, Ida Lupino also co-wrote and directed the film *Outrage* (1950) which is one of the first films about rape.

The Hitch-Hiker (1953) is another notable film and perhaps her most spoke about as director. Both *The Hitch-Hiker* and *Outrage* were selected for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally historically or aesthetically significant".

"How do you know what kinda girl I am?" — Stella Goodwin

An atmospheric noir from 1941, *Out of the Fog* tells the story of a Brooklyn pier racketeer, Goff (John Garfield) who bullies boat-owners into paying protection money. But when two fishermen, tired of the intimidation, decide to eliminate the gangster themselves rather than complain to the police things go from bad to worse when the self-centered daughter (Lupino) takes up with Goff and the pair decide to do away with him.

Humphrey Bogart was originally chosen to play the intimidating Harold Goff but after filming *They Drive by Night* (1940) and *High Sierra* (1940) with Bogart, they had not gotten along. According to IMDb, she protested, and because a bigger name than Bogart at the time he wasn't cast. An angry



RICH PIECES

BROADWAY

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

Bogart sent a telegram to Jack Warner asking, "When did Ida Lupino start casting films at your studio?"

The film is based on the play *The Gentle People* by Irwin Shaw. It opened on Broadway at the Belasco Theatre, 111 W. 44th St. on January 5, 1939 and ran for 141 performances until the May.

Although overlooked for setting the tone of noir, it is this film and *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) – released the same year – that helped set the tone for what would follow throughout the decade.

This is one of four movies in which Ida Lupino and John Garfield appeared together; the others are: *The Sea Wolf* (1941), *Thank Your Lucky Stars* (1943), and *Hollywood Canteen* (1944).

Papers were harsh on the film at the time, *The New York Times* stating: 'For "Out of the Fog," the picture which the Warners have adapted from the play and which opened yesterday at the Strand, is a heavy and dreary recital of largely synthetic woes, laced with moderate suspense and spotted here and there with humor. It doesn't even come close to being a really good film, and, if you want the honest truth, it is literally as old-fashioned as sin.' Harsh – I'll let you make your own min up.

As mentioned already, at this point Ida Lupino, despite playing a more supportive character becomes more recognisable as a brunette which was not that uncommon for the time and the noir genre.

No surprise she dabbled in becoming a brunette pinup, iconic of the era.

You could use a few tips like: 'I'm sad and lonely. Just want someone to talk to. Don't know any nice girls in the great big town.' — Phyllis Martin

Produced under Ida Lupino's production company *The Bigamist* (1953) sees San Francisco businessman Harry Graham (Edmond O'Brien) and his wife and business partner, Eve (Joan Fontaine), in the early stages of adopting a child. When private investigator Jordan (Edmund Gwenn) uncovers the fact that Graham has another wife, Phyllis (Lupino), and a small child in Los Angeles, he confesses everything. The story is told from an interesting flashback – common for films of the era – as Graham tells of the strains in his marriage with Eve and how he found himself falling for the kind-hearted waitress Phyllis.

Although not the first instance of a female star directing herself – earlier examples including Grace Cunard and Mabel Normand in their silent shorts – *The Bigamist* is believed to be the first sound film directed by its female star. It is also the only time Ida Lupino directed herself.

It is a public-domain film, hence the numerous different variants you will find, notably the terrible quality. This is also down to originally set up as an RKO production, falling into difficulties when the studio pulled out, leaving the film without distribution.

Despite the quality of the print, the film is a quality drama with actors top of their game, *The New York Times* referring to how the film belongs to Lupino in 'more ways than one ... This fragile



RICH PIECES

BROADWAY

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

director keels the action with such mounting tension, muted compassion and sharklike alacrity for behavior detail that the average spectator may feel he is eavesdropping on the excellent dialogue.'

By this time in her life, her second husband, Collier Young, was then the husband of Joan Fontaine and after working on the film she didn't direct another film until 12 years later with *The Trouble with Angels* (1966).

Stepping in... again

"The city can be lonely too. Sometimes people who are never alone are the loneliest." — Mary Malden

Nicholas Ray (with a little help from Ida) directs this overlooked tough noir. Moving out of the urban environment associated with the genre, Jim Wilson (Robert Ryan) – the archetypal New York police detective on the edge – is hardened and embittered by his years of dealing city crime and, in turn is becoming more and more violent himself. For his own good, Wilson's captain assigns him to a murder investigation out of town for a change of scenery and, while searching for a rural killer, meets the suspect's sister, Mary Malden (Ida Lupino), a blind woman who has the potential to turn his life around.

The tough and authentic nature of the film can be attributed to Ray and screenwriter A.I. Bezzerides's research on the daily life of the police force including their procedure in preparation. This involved riding with detectives in Boston's South End. A lot of this is a given nowadays but for the time was something new.

Based on the 1945 novel *Mad with Much Heart* by Gerald Butler, the synopsis of which reads: 'In a small and peaceful English, village a little girl is brutally murdered, and the townsmen, quiet with cold fury, band together to catch the killer.' The film follows, what appears to be, a sketch of the story switching the setting from England to America.

Ida Lupino took over directing duties after Ray fell ill. There are certain parts of the film where this is noticeable, such as framing and pacing but for the most part stitches together.

The tough and authentic nature of the film can be attributed to Ray and screenwriter A.I. Bezzerides's research on the daily life of the police force including their procedure in preparation. This involved riding with detectives in Boston's South End. A lot of this is a given nowadays but for the time was something new.

The chemistry between Ryan and Lupino is intense, the former's stature unmistakable as the lead.

The New York Times review was harsh. Reflected on some interesting points: 'An obvious attempt to get something more than sheer melodrama onto the screen—something pictorially reflective of the emotional confusion of a man...' It goes on to throw away Ida Lupino's performance as "mawkishly stagey as the blind girl who melts the cop's heart." Most of the credit though is given to the sincere direction and the striking outdoor photography.



RICH PIECES

BROADWAY

EVENING COURSE



@BroadwayCinema
@richpieces

broadway.org.uk
richpieces.com

You will notice that composer Bernard Herrmann replicated many elements of the score for *North by Northwest* and *Psycho*.

Some overlooked classics include: *The Hard Way* (1946), *Woman in Hiding* (1943), *Devotion* (1949), *Private Hell 36* (1954) and *The Big Knife* (1955).

Final years...

In her latter years, as with a lot of stars (especially women of her age) she began to move towards television both in front and behind the camera. She starred in and directed *The Twilight Zone*, starring in episode 4 – "The Sixteen-Millimeter Shrine" – from season 1 and directing episode 25 – "The Masks" – from season 5 in 1964.

Worth watching some rare interviews. On directing (1:38:00) she discusses with American journalist. [The Bobbie Wygant Archives](#) are highly recommended as a resource.

Her final appearance on screen was in *My Boys Are Good Boys* released in 1979.

She was seen as somewhat of a recluse in her latter years but is well documented from visiting journalists that she was welcoming and sharp witted. She is quoted as saying she never saw herself as a feminist, despite what she achieved as a woman working in the industry – that there was nothing special to it and that, according to [Fox News](#), "She was just doing her job." (It's a rather flippant statement, but often a common reflection of her generation, especially those working for studios. But, despite her comment, in working so independently under her own production company it was way more than just doing a job. It meant something... even more so in hindsight.

Ida Lupino passed away on 3rd August 1995 from a stroke while undergoing treatment for colon cancer. Her legacy is one of the most important not just in Hollywood but, most importantly to independent filmmaking and women in cinema. What she achieved during her time as an actress is unrivalled for her day and barely equally since by *any* minority filmmaker.