"Somebody's Going To Pay
...because he forgot to kill me..."

"THE BIG HEAT"
FROM THE SHOCK PACKED SATURDAY EVENING POST SERIAL!

starring
GLEN FORD
GLORIA GRAHAME
JOCELYN BRANDO

with Alexander Scourby, Lee Marvin, Jeanette Nolan
Screen Play by SYDNEY BOEHM
Produced by ROBERT ARTHUR
Directed by FRITZ LANG
“Somebody’s Got to Pay…”

But the question is:

WHO and HOW MANY?
Roger Ebert’s Review:

• **Glenn Ford** plays a straight-arrow police detective named Bannion in Fritz Lang's "The Big Heat" (1953) ... He is the good cop in a bad town.

• That at least is the surface reality of the film. But there is another level coiling away underneath, a subversive level in which Lang questions the human cost of Bannion's ethical stand.
The film is as deceptive and two-faced as anything Lang ever made, with its sunny domestic tranquility precariously separated from a world of violence. Bannion thinks he can draw a line between his loving wife and adorable child, and the villains he deals with at work.
December 5, 1890 – August 2, 1976) was an Austrian-German-American filmmaker, screenwriter, and occasional film producer and actor. One of the best-known émigrés from Germany's school of Expressionism, he was dubbed the "Master of Darkness" by the British Film Institute.
• Fritz Lang (1890-1976) was one of the cinema's great architects of evil. His "Metropolis" (1927) is one of the best of all silent films, but it was with "M" (1931), and Peter Lorre's eerie performance as a child murderer, that he stared unblinkingly at pure malevolence.
He fled Hitler and Germany and became a prolific director of Hollywood genre pictures -- some competent, some masterpieces of film noir, the greatest "The Big Heat." There is a kind of ironic pessimism in his work, undermining the apparent bravery of his heroes.
• This is **one of the inspired performances of Grahame**, a legendary character who became known as the "Can't Say No Girl," and not just because she sang the song in "Oklahoma!“

• **She won an Oscar for best supporting actress for "The Bad and the Beautiful"** (1952) and should have won again the next year for "The Big Heat," where her energy is the best reason to see the film.
• There was something fresh and modern about Grahame; she's always a little ditzy, as if nodding to an unheard melody..."It wasn't the way I looked at a man," she said, "it was the thought behind it."

• Lee Marvin made a scary foil for her, with his long, lean face and his ugly-handsome scowl. If Alexander Scourby's mob boss seems like a writer's conceit, Marvin's character brings real menace into the picture, coldly and without remorse.
• On the surface, "The Big Heat" is about Bannion's fearless one-man struggle against a mob...But if that were its real subject, it would be long and flat and dry.

• The women bring the life into it, along with Lee Marvin.
Dark City: The Lost World of Film Noir by E. Muller

• “The Big Heat is the ultimate angry cop noir. Uptown critics dismissed it at the time...They missed the cold brilliance that electrified genre conventions, and the exhilarating union of brooding Germanic fatalism and Wild West ass-kicking.

• Lang’s early German films, Metropolis and M, etched the first blue-prints of Dark City: omnipotent external forces dictating the fate of innocent people, and uncontrollable internal urges leading to self-destruction.”
Memorable Lines from *The Big Heat*

- “Hey, that’s nice perfume. “ “Something new. Attracts mosquitoes and repels men.” Lee Marvin (gangster Vince Stone) and his girlfriend (Gloria Grahame)

- “Hey, I like this. Early nothing.” Gloria Grahame (gangster moll Debby Marsh) about a fleabag hotel room.

- “We’re all sisters under the mink.” Gloria Grahame

“I’ve been rich and I’ve been poor. Believe me, rich is better.” Gloria Grahame to Glenn Ford (Sgt. Dave Bannion)
BEFORE THE MOVIE
Tommmarybeth@Verizon.net

• The slides form this class will be on the Osher Website before next Tuesday’s class.
Here’s another movie poster for “The Big Heat”

• I chose it because the captions on it are so typical for these kind of movies and these kind of books in the 1950s!
Somewhere in the Night: Film Noir and the American City by N. Christopher

• “...an unshakeable axiom in film noir...is that crime pays... Racketeering is a flourishing urban industry in the postwar (WW2) years...the ties between criminal racketeering and political corruption become inextricable...All of these criminal pursuits after 1945 are organized around corporate business concepts: notably, the corporate pyramid, at the peak...white-collar managers with their legal mouthpieces and accountants...at the base street soldiers, enforcers and runners.”

• The Big Heat portrays this kind of world.
Film Noir: The Dark Side of the Screen by F. Hirsch

• “The theme of the hidden or unexplored self, a favorite subject of German Expressionist films, continued to fascinate Lang throughout his career. Lang’s typical American heroes are seemingly average men who become deranged under the pressure of extraordinary circumstances.

• Lang is the pre-eminent noir director...”
MICHAEL MANN, DIRECTOR

- “The women are fascinating in The Big Heat.”
- Lang does something in this movie that wasn’t done in movies till then.
- Effect of WW2 on these movies: “meaning is what you put in.”
- “This is the way of the world.”
MARTIN SCORCESE, DIRECTOR

• “Glenn Ford’s character is almost a machine.”

• In part two of the movie’s most infamous scene, it is almost as if

• Destiny itself does it: “What goes around comes around.”
AFTER THE MOVIE
MICHAEL MANN, DIRECTOR

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• “Glenn Ford’s character is almost a machine.”

• In part two of the movie’s most infamous scene, it is almost as if Destiny itself does it: “What goes around comes around.”
This is Roger Ebert’s conclusion. Do you agree with it?

• Bannion's buried agenda is to set up the women, allow their deaths to confirm his hatred of the Lagana-Stone crew, and then wade in to get revenge. Of course he doesn't understand this himself, and it is perfectly possible for us to watch the movie and never have it occur to us. That's the beauty of Lang's moral ambidexterity. He tells the story of a heroic cop, while using it to mask another story, so much darker, beneath.