

SCREENING #2: *The Woman in the Window* (99 minutes)

Production Company	International Pictures (independent production)
US Release	3 November 1944 (One month after <i>Double Indemnity</i>)
Producer	Nunnally Johnson
Director	Fritz Lang (born in Vienna in 1890 to a middle-class Jewish family, but his mother converted to Catholicism; studied painting, 1910-1914, until World War I; served in the Austrian army until wounded in 1916. Entered the film industry after the war and became a leading director at UFA in Berlin, where he created superb films such as <i>Siegfried</i> (1924) and <i>Metropolis</i> (1927), as well as others about an underworld criminal mastermind, “Dr. Mabuse”; adapted ably to the coming of sound with <i>M</i> , a still-powerful study of the capture of a serial killer of children; left Germany after Goebbels invited him to become head of the new state film institute; emigrated to the USA in 1934; directed dozens of films for various studios, many of them concerned with criminals and ordinary citizens placed under extraordinary pressures—economic, social, and moral. Just before <i>Woman in the Window</i> he directed two anti-Nazi thrillers, <i>Hangmen also Die!</i> and <i>Ministry of Fear</i> . <i>The Woman in the Window</i> , his 25 th feature, was the first of two that featured the same three actors: E. G. Robinson, Joan Bennett, and Dan Duryea. The next was <i>Scarlet Street</i> , and the two films are almost mirrors of one another in terms of the themes and story trajectories. His career declined somewhat in the 1950s, but the French and American “auteurist” critics considered him one of the great masters from one end of his career to the other.
Screenplay	Nunnally Johnson (active as both a writer and a producer from the early 1930s through the 1950s; able writer in many different genres). Johnson’s very clever screenplay was based on a 1942 novel, <i>Once off Guard</i> , by J. H. Wallis.
Art Direction	Duncan Cramer
Photography	Milton Krasner (Vernon Walker did the “Process Photography”)
Editor	Marjorie Johnson
Music	Arthur Lange (Note that music’s role in this film is much more circumspect than in <i>Double Indemnity</i> ; unlike Rózsa, who wrote the latter score, Lange was not one of the top Hollywood composers.)

Main Cast: **Edward G. Robinson** (*Professor Richard Wanley*); **Joan Bennett** (*Alice Reed*) — these two “above the title”; also Raymond Massey (*District Attorney Frank Lalor*); Edmund Breon (*Dr. Michael Barkstane*); **Dan Duryea** (Heidt)

E. G. Robinson: “[Lang] was part of everything, not just in the direction of actors, but to the point of doing the makeup. He would even sweep the floor of the set. ... Fritz was a very civilized, erudite man, and he could be jovial. But he could be seemingly cruel, especially with the crew. ... For a while he would mend his ways. Then he would revert to type again.”

Nunnally Johnson: “I’d heard him bawl out a fine old actor, embarrassing to have him shout at this old Englishman [Breon]. [He told Johnson when shooting was over that there was going to be] “ a little party on the set,” to which Johnson replied: “If I were you, I wouldn’t go. ... Somebody is going to drop something on your head, Fritz. You know, the picture’s over. You won’t be the boss.”

Quoted from Patrick McGilligan, *Fritz Lang: The Nature of the Beast* (NY: St. Martin’s Press, 1997).

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