

Time Going By

A *Casablanca* Chronology

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1923

Hal Wallis, producer of *Casablanca*, is hired by Warner Bros. as an assistant in the publicity department.

1931

The song "As Time Goes By," written by Herman Hupfield, appears in the Broadway show *Everybody's Welcome*.

1938

High school teacher Murray Burnett visits Europe where he observes Nazi persecution, the plight of refugees, and a French bar with a black singer, all of which would become important elements of his play *Everybody Comes to Rick's*.

Algiers, with Hedy Lamarr and Charles Boyer, is a hit movie and establishes North Africa as an exotic locale for danger and romance. Later, a major inducement for the making of *Casablanca* is its repetition of many of the attractive elements in *Algiers*.

1940

Murray Burnett and Joan Alison write *Everybody Comes to Rick's*.

1941

The day after Pearl Harbor, Burnett and Alison's agent submits *Everybody Comes to Rick's* to Warner Bros. in Los Angeles.

December 28. With the approval of producer Hal Wallis, Warner Bros. purchases *Everybody Comes to Rick's* for \$20,000.

December 31. Hal Wallis changes the title *Everybody Comes to Rick's* to *Casablanca*.

1942

Warner Bros. plants a fake story in the *Hol-*

lywood Reporter announcing that Ronald Reagan, Ann Sheridan, and Dennis Morgan will play the leads in *Casablanca*.

January. Humphrey Bogart signs a seven-year contract with Warner Bros., making him one of nineteen listed "stars" at the studio.

January 9. Hal Wallis assigns Warner Bros. screenwriters Aeneas MacKenzie and Wally Kline to write the first draft of the *Casablanca* script.

April 2. Jack Warner, head of Warner Bros. studio, sends a memo to Hal Wallis suggesting George Raft for the part of Rick. The next day, Wallis sends Warner a memo telling Warner that the *Casablanca* script is being written for Humphrey Bogart.

April 10. A Warner Bros. press release announces that Humphrey Bogart will play the lead in *Casablanca* opposite Michele Morgan.

April 21. Ingrid Bergman is informed by Selznick International, the studio to which she is under contract, that she is being lent to Warner Bros. to play Ilsa Lund in *Casablanca*.

May 25. Shooting on *Casablanca* begins. Michael Curtiz directs Ingrid Bergman, Humphrey Bogart, and Dooley Wilson at La Belle Aurore Café in the Paris flashback sequence.

May 25. Paul Henreid signs a seven-year contract with Warner Bros., which will include his role of Victor Laszlo in *Casablanca*.

June 25. Paul Henreid's first scene is shot, a full month after the beginning of production.

July 3. Bogart first says one of *Casablanca's* most famous lines, "Here's looking at you, kid."

July 17. Curtiz begins to shoot the final scenes at the airport.

July 22. Bogart and Bergman begin playing the crucial scene at Rick's apartment.

August 3. The last scheduled day of shooting.

August 7. Hal Wallis sends a memo that includes Rick's final line, "Louis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship."

August 22. The last day of shooting. A French police officer reads a teletype announcing the murder of the two German couriers carrying the letters of transit.

October. The Bureau of Motion Pictures (BMI), a government office charged with ensuring movies presented a correct image of America and the war, praises *Casablanca* for communicating appropriate wartime messages.

November 7. The Allies invade North Africa and within a few days capture Casablanca. Warner Bros. takes advantage of this huge publicity opportunity and decides to move up the release of *Casablanca* from the originally planned spring 1943 date.

November 26. On Thanksgiving Day, *Casablanca* premieres at the Hollywood Theatre in New York where it plays for ten weeks.

1943

January. The Office of War Information's (OWI) Overseas Branch withholds *Casablanca* from distribution in North Africa because of the film's pro-Free French and anti-Vichy sentiments. U.S. policy at the time was still not clear on levels of support for these opposing French governments.

January 14. The *Casablanca* Conference, a meeting between President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, begins. The public announcement of this conference on January 24, the day after the general release of *Casablanca*, provides the film with its second major publicity tie-in.

January 23. *Casablanca* goes into general release in the United States.

March 20. "As Time Goes By" begins a twenty-one-week run on the top ten of the NBC radio show *Your Hit Parade*, including four weeks—April 24, May 8, 15, and 22—at number one. The lead male singer on the show during this period is Frank Sinatra. The most popular recorded version of the song is by Rudy Vallee.

As *Casablanca* becomes a commercial hit during the early months of 1943, Warner Bros. considers making a sequel to be titled *Brazzaville*, but no script is ever written.

April 3. Conrad Veidt (Major Strasser) dies at age fifty.

April 26. Screen Guild Players on CBS radio presents a half-hour version of *Casablanca* with Bogart, Bergman, and Henreid.

December. Warner Bros. announces that General Charles de Gaulle, leader of the Free French, has requested that *Casablanca* be shown to his staff in London.

The National Board of Review names *Casablanca* one of the top-ten films of 1943.

1944

January 5. *Variety* estimates that *Casablanca* is the seventh highest grossing Hollywood movie of 1943, returning \$3,700,000 to Warner Bros.

January 24. The *Lux Radio Theatre* on CBS radio presents an hour-long version of *Casablanca* with Alan Ladd as Rick, Hedy Lamarr as Ilsa, and John Loden as Victor. Lamarr had been Warner Bros.' original choice for Ilsa but at the time was not available.

The *Film Daily Yearbook*, in a poll of 439 critics and writers, names *Casablanca* the fifth best movie of 1943, behind *Random Harvest*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, *Yankee Doodle Dandy*, and *This Is the Army*.

February 7. *Casablanca* is nominated for eight Academy Awards: Best Picture, Actor (Humphrey Bogart), Supporting Actor (Claude Rains), Director (Michael Curtiz), Screenplay (Philip G. and Julius J. Epstein and Howard Koch), Cinematography (Arthur Edeson), Music (Max Steiner), and Editing (Owen Marks).

March 2. *Casablanca* wins three 1943 Oscars: Best Picture, Director, and Screenplay. In addition, producer Hal Wallis receives the Irving Thalberg Award.

August. A Gallup Poll of moviegoers done for the film industry shows that Humphrey Bogart has the fifth highest approval rating of all Hollywood stars, up from eighteenth in April 1942. The same poll ranks Ingrid Bergman nineteenth, up from seventy-eighth in 1942.

Warner Bros.' *Passage to Marseilles* attempts to reproduce the success of *Casablanca* by starring Bogart and featuring six other performers from *Casablanca*, as well as director Michael Curtiz and producer Hal Wallis.

1945

The script of *Casablanca* is published in *The Best Film Plays of 1943-44*, edited by John Gassner and Dudley Nichols. There are significant differences between this published version and the actual film. *A Man Called Jordan*, a daily fifteen-minute serial on CBS radio, whose story location is Istanbul but whose situation is obviously modeled on *Casablanca*, begins a two-year run.

Fall. *Casablanca* is released in Paris and does mediocre business.

1946

August 12. The play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* premieres on stage under the title *Casablanca* in Newport, Rhode Island. It runs one week.

Casablanca is released in Germany, but the word "Nazi" is never spoken in the film.

1949

Warner Bros. re-releases *Casablanca* as part

of a double-feature with "*G*" *Men* (1935).

1951

CBS radio resurrects *A Man Called Jordan* as a half-hour weekly series *Rocky Jordan*, with the Rick-like Jordan running the Café Tambourine in Cairo. The new show features George Raft, who had been Jack Warner's choice for Rick. The series is broadcast for only one season.

Bogart's production company Santana tries to repeat the success of *Casablanca* in *Sirocco*, with a plot closely parallel to the earlier film and a similar exotic locale, Damascus.

1952

February 9. Philip G. Epstein, co-scriptwriter, dies at age forty-two.

Murray Burnett creates *Café Istanbul*, a half-hour series on ABC radio. Marlene Dietrich plays Mlle. Madou, a character apparently modeled on Rick Blaine.

1953

Dooley Wilson (Sam) dies at age fifty-nine.

1954

January 19. Sydney Greenstreet (Ferrari) dies at age seventy-four.

1955

S. Z. Sakall (Carl) dies at age seventy-one. *Casablanca* begins a one-year season on ABC television as a one-hour series starring Charles McGraw as Rick Jason and Clarence Muse as Sam. The show appears every three weeks as one of three rotating shows in the series called *Warner Brothers Presents*.

1957

January 14. Humphrey Bogart dies at age fifty-seven.

April 21. *Casablanca* plays for the first time at the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge, Massachusetts, near Harvard University, initiating a cult both for Bogart and the film itself.

1959

In Jean Luc Godard's movie *Breathless*, the film that launched the French "New Wave," as an important development in international cinema, Jean-Paul Belmondo salutes Bogart on-screen by imitating some of Bogart's gestures and whispering, "Bogie."

1962

April 11. Director Michael Curtiz dies at age seventy-three.

1964

February 7. *Time* magazine reports on "Bogey Worship" at the Brattle Theatre. Thousands of students attend regular Bogart film festivals and repeat lines from the films. Among the students' favorites is *Casablanca*.

March 23. Peter Lorre (Ugarte) dies at age fifty-nine.

1967

May 30. Claude Rains (Captain Renault) dies at age seventy-eight.

1969

Woody Allen's stage comedy *Play It Again, Sam* opens in New York.

1971

Max Steiner (film score) dies at age eighty-three.

1972

The film version of *Play It Again, Sam* begins with the airport scene from *Casablanca* and ends with Woody Allen and Diane Keaton repeating it.

1973

August 25. The *Los Angeles Times* reports that in a nationwide poll it commissioned, *Casablanca* is "Warner Brothers' most popular film in fifty years."

The *International Motion Picture Almanac* includes *Casablanca* for the first time in its annual list of "The Great Hundred" motion pictures.

1974

RCA releases the LP *Casablanca: Classic Film Scores for Humphrey Bogart*, by the National Philharmonic Orchestra, featuring an 8½-minute "*Casablanca Suite*" based on Max Steiner's film score.

As part of *Avon's Film Classics Library*, Richard J. Anobile edits a frame-by-frame re-creation of *Casablanca* in book form.

1977

A *TV Guide* poll of TV station program directors from all parts of the United States names *Casablanca* the most popular and most often shown movie on television.

November. After polling its membership, the American Film Institute announces that *Casablanca* has been voted the third greatest American film of all time, behind *Gone with the Wind* (1939) and *Citizen Kane* (1941).

1978

Casey Robinson (uncredited co-scriptwriter) dies at age seventy-six.

September 9. Jack L. Warner dies at age eighty-six.

1980

You Must Remember This: The Filming of Casablanca, by Robert Francisco, is the first of several book-length histories of the production of *Casablanca*.

Caboblanco is a blatant imitation of *Casablanca* in both title and plotline, with Charles Bronson as the sullen owner of a nightclub on the coast of Peru.

1981

Bertie Wiggins's hit single "Key Largo," a song about the ideal love between Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, includes several references to *Casablanca*.

May 20. A television special *Muppets Go to the Movies: Play It Again* includes a parody of the airport scene in *Casablanca*, with Kermit the Frog as Rick and Miss Piggy as Ilsa.

November 15. Harry Reasoner narrates a segment of the CBS television show *60 Minutes* devoted to *Casablanca* entitled "The Best Movie Ever Made."

1982

In a well-known hoax, Chuck Ross mails the script of *Casablanca* under the title of *Everybody Comes to Rick's* to over two hundred agents. Of the eighty-five who respond, thirty-eight reject it as an unworthy film project, and only thirty-three recognize it.

Ingrid Bergman dies at age sixty-seven.

1983

April 10. A second attempt at a *Casablanca* TV series, this time an hour-long version on NBC featuring David Soul as Rick, is canceled after only three episodes. Joseph Biroc wins an Emmy for outstanding cinematography.

The British Film Institute votes *Casablanca* the greatest film ever made.

1984

CBC/Fox copyrights a videocassette black-and-white version of *Casablanca* for public sale.

1985

January. Robert Coover's short story in *Playboy* "You Must Remember This" is mainly a long, explicit, sex scene between Rick and Ilsa. The story is reprinted in 1987 in Coover's book *A Night at the Movies*.

In his novel *Suspects*, David Thomson imagines the post-movie lives of eighty-five characters, including Rick, Ilsa, and Victor.

1986

Producer Hal Wallis dies at age eighty-six.

March 25. The Turner Broadcasting System pays \$1.2 billion dollars for the MGM studio along with its 3,500-title MGM, RKO, and pre-1950 Warner Bros. film and television library, including *Casablanca*.

May 13. The opening of the Smithsonian's exhibit "Hollywood: Legend and Reality" features Sam's piano and other props from Rick's Café Americain and the film's production.

July. *Billboard* magazine's weekly chart of the best-selling videocassettes lists *Casablanca* as number four, its highest position.

1987

A poll of 113 film critics and historians taken for the Hollywood Centennial names *Casablanca* the third greatest American movie of all time, behind *Citizen Kane* and *Gone with the Wind*.

May 30. *Billboard* reports that from 1983 to 1987 *Casablanca* is the fifth best-selling videocassette "classic" as determined by *Billboard*'s weekly charts.

1988

In John Kobal's book *The Top 100 Movies*, a panel of film experts from twenty-two countries selects *Casablanca* ninth on the list, just behind *The Gold Rush* (1925) and one ahead of *Rashomon* (1951).

March 14. The popular ABC television comedy-detective show *Moonlighting* presents a full-hour parody of *Casablanca*.

November 9. The colorized *Casablanca* premieres on Ted Turner's cable Superstation TBS.

December 16. Sam's piano is sold at auction to a Japanese trading company for \$154,000, at the time the second largest sum ever paid for a piece of movie memorabilia (the ruby slippers from *The Wizard of Oz* were auctioned off for \$165,000 the same year).

1989

The romantic comedy *When Harry Met Sally* elaborately compares the relationship between Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan to that of Rick and Ilsa.

November. *Casablanca* is among the first twenty-five movies to be named to the National Film Registry.

1990

The movie *Havana*, set in revolutionary Cuba in 1958, closely parallels the characters and plot of *Casablanca*. Robert Redford, Lena Olin, and Raul Julia play updated equivalents of Rick, Ilsa, and Victor.

1991

April. Murray Burnett combines his play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and the movie *Casablanca* into a new drama, *Rick's Bar Casablanca*, which opens for a one-month run in London's West End.

1992

March 29. Paul Henreid dies at age eighty-four.

March 30. Joan Alison, co-author of *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, dies.

April. The beginning of the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the original release of *Casablanca*. Several books are published, the film goes into limited re-release, and a new videotape of the film hits the top-ten bestseller lists with sales of half a million copies.

The Casablanca Cookbook: Winning and Dining at Rick's by Sarah Key, Jennifer Newman Brazil, and Vicki Wells features such recipes as "Yvonne's Spicy Tomato Rolls," "Ugarte's Tangy Chicken Wings," and "Rick and Ilsa's Apricot Pistachio Cake."

1993

January. *Casablanca, Morocco*, celebrates the semi-centennial of the release of the movie *Casablanca* and the Casablanca Conference of World War II.

1994

In the *Entertainment Weekly Guide to the Greatest Movies Ever Made*, the editors select *Casablanca* as the fifth greatest drama.

1995

A Warner Bros. cartoon *Carrotblanca* parodies *Casablanca* and features Bugs Bunny as Rick.

Co-scriptwriter Howard Koch dies at age ninety-two.

1996

The futuristic action film *Barb Wire* recycles the plot of *Casablanca* with the buxom Pamela Anderson Lee in the Rick role.

1997

Murray Burnett, co-author of the play *Everybody Comes to Rick's*, dies at age eighty-seven.

1998

A novel by Michael Walsh, *As Time Goes By*, is a sequel to *Casablanca*. Its public reception is disappointing.

June. A poll of 1,500 film industry professionals, film historians and critics, and a few politicians, conducted by the American Film Institute to name the one hundred greatest American films, ranks *Casablanca* second, behind only *Citizen Kane*.

1999

Tens of thousands of people who are regular voters at the Internet Movie Database, in a monthly updating of its Top 25 Movies list, consistently place *Casablanca* in the top ten.

June. An American Film Institute poll to select the fifty greatest "Screen Legends" names Ingrid Bergman the fourth greatest woman star and Humphrey Bogart the number one male star.