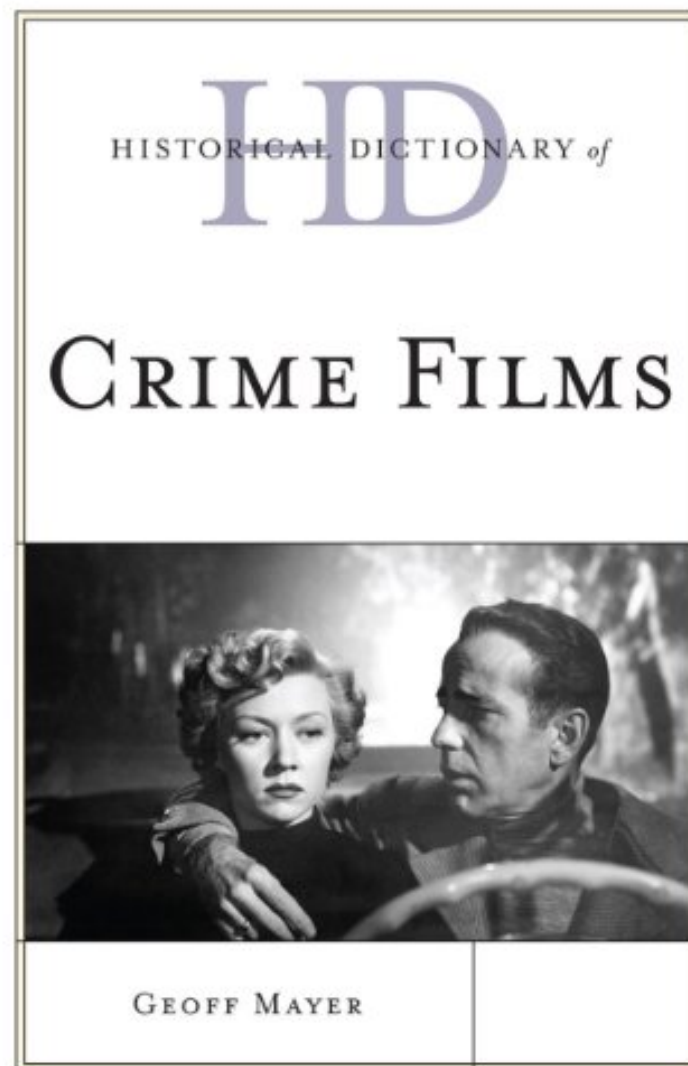


(Download) Historical Dictionary of Crime Films (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)

## Historical Dictionary of Crime Films (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)

*Geoff Mayer*

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**Geoff Mayer : Historical Dictionary of Crime Films (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Historical Dictionary of Crime Films (Historical Dictionaries of Literature and the Arts):

The crime film genre consists of detective films, gangster films, suspense thrillers, film noir, and caper films and is produced throughout the world. Crime film was there at the birth of cinema, and it has accompanied cinema over more than a century of history, passing from silent films to talkies, from black-and-white to color. The genre includes such classics as *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Godfather*, *Gaslight*, *The French Connection*, and *Serpico*, as well as more recent successes like *Seven*, *Drive*, and *L.A. Confidential*. *The Historical Dictionary of Crime Films* covers the history of this genre through a chronology, an introductory essay, and an extensive bibliography. The dictionary section has over 300 cross-referenced entries on key films, directors, performers, and studios. This book is an excellent access point for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more about crime cinema.

From Booklist Crime films have a long, sustained history. Differentiated from thrillers, crime films focus more on crime and the law rather than violence itself. This book's historical look at crime examines genres including detective, gangster, caper, and film noir. Mayer, an Australian film historian and academician, brings an international focus to the work. Crime films in different countries have unique perspectives about crime films that are addressed in this volume, particularly in the lengthy introduction. A 30-page chronology of international crime films covers 1900 to 2010. The main section of the book provides an alphabetical treatment of films; people (e.g., authors, directors, writers); and concepts involved in this genre. Entries vary from a paragraph to 4 pages, with the majority covering people, whose entries include vital dates and chronological histories of their contributions. The list of films is very selective; for instance, *Double Indemnity* did not make the list, although it is cited in the entry on Fred MacMurray. Cross-references are indicated by boldface terms. The overall tone is objective, with analysis strongest in entries that address films in different countries. An extensive 40-page bibliography is organized topically and then by geography. There is no index, which would have been useful. The book's layout is text-heavy, with a few black-and-white photographs dotting the pages. More photographs would have been a welcome addition. Providing basic reference information for crime films, this book covers relevant contributions to the genre and is recommended for public and academic collections.

--Lesley Farmer Crime films have a long, sustained history. Differentiated from thrillers, crime films focus more on crime and the law rather than violence itself. This book's historical look at crime examines genres including detective, gangster, caper, and film noir. Mayer, an Australian film historian and academician, brings an international focus to the work. Crime films in different countries have unique perspectives about crime films, which are addressed in this volume, particularly the lengthy introduction. A 30-page chronology of international crime films covers 1900 to 2010. The main section of the book provides an alphabetical treatment of films; people (e.g., authors, directors, writers); and concepts involved in this genre. Entries vary from a paragraph to 4 pages, with the majority covering people, whose entries include vital dates and chronological histories of their contributions.... Cross-references are indicated by boldface terms. The overall tone is objective, with analysis strongest in entries that address films in different countries. An extensive 40-page bibliography is organized topically and then by geography.... Providing basic reference information for crime films, this book covers relevant contributions to the genre and is recommended for public and academic collections. (Booklist) The terminology contained within this book focuses on films, directors, performers, and studios. Brief histories and biographies are given as well as discussion on social and political effects related to the films. Relatively few terms discuss the categories of crime films that encompass the film genre but these are covered elsewhere in the text. The book leads with a chronology of the crime film and an introduction that describes crime film categories as well as a global history of crime films. The emphasis is not solely on American films and such a study would be poorly lacking as the Asian and European film industries are key in presenting crime film treatments. The book is somewhat of an academic treasure, featuring an extensive bibliography with an introductory annotation about the research. (American Reference Books Annual) A dictionary of this sort is selective by definition. In his introduction, Mayer (La Trobe Univ., Australia) explains his definition of crime fiction and divides his discussion into the categories of detective, gangster, caper, and suspense thrillers, explaining cultural origins, generic qualities, and significant films and people associated with each. He also discusses the cinema of countries other than the US, primarily those in Europe, but also Hong Kong and Japan. Each receives fuller treatment in the body of the work. Entries average one page but range from a few lines to more than five pages. They cover films (e.g., *Maltese Falcon*, *Get Carter*, *The Godfather*), actors (e.g., Bogart, Bogarde, Lake), writers (e.g., Cain, Gardner, Highsmith), directors (e.g., Hitchcock, Scorsese, Tarantino), and topics related to the genre (e.g., blacklist, hit man, yakuza, prison movies, *The Saint*, *Sherlock Holmes*). Entries all explain the subject's role within the film genre. As one would expect, classics and famous films are included, but so are the more obscure (or at least lesser known), e.g., New Zealand noir, *Shallow Grave*, and many foreign-language films. Dates covered by the entries stretch from the pre-cinema literary origins of crime fiction to roughly 2009. A film chronology begins in 1900 and ends in 2010. The 300-plus entries include cross-references. Individual entries do not have bibliographies, but the book as a whole does, listing works on several of the countries and subgenres, along with features such as gender, visual style, and music. Information in many of the entries may be found elsewhere, but Mayer's bibliography, and the introduction--in which he discusses the origins and distinctive traits of several subgenres--will be valuable to students and researchers (though perhaps not worth the steep price tag). Summing Up: Recommended. Lower-division undergraduates through

researchers/faculty; general readers. (CHOICE)