

The History of the Twentieth Century

Episode 394

“The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of”

Transcript

[music: Fanfare]

“In 1539 the Knight Templars of Malta paid tribute to Charles V of Spain by sending him a Golden Falcon encrusted from beak to claw with rarest jewels—but pirates seized the galley carrying this priceless token and the fate of the Maltese Falcon remains a mystery to this day.”

Introductory text appearing after the opening credits in the 1941 film, *The Maltese Falcon*.

Welcome to *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

[music: Opening War Theme]

Episode 394. The Stuff Dreams Are Made Of.

I want to continue today with our series on Hollywood studios. I told you about the smallest of the five majors, RKO Radio Pictures. Today we move up to number four: Warner Brothers.

I talked about Warner Brothers before. It began as a smaller studio that leapt into the category of major studio when it released the first talking picture, *The Jazz Singer*, in 1927. I told you that story in episode 274, where I also talked about the origins of the studio.

Warner Brothers was literally formed by four brothers named Warner: Harry, Albert, Sam, and Jack. They were children of—say it with me—Jewish immigrants from what was then the Russian Empire. The three elder Warner brothers were actually born in what is now Poland and anglicized their Yiddish names in the United States. The youngest, Jack, was born in Ontario.

Here’s another familiar story: the brothers began with a chain of movie theaters and moved into production initially to supply films for their theaters. The two youngest brothers, Sam and Jack, took over the film production end of the business. As you already know, as Sam worked hard on production of *The Jazz Singer*, he developed a series of infections that began with abscesses in his teeth, and he died the day before the film premiered, at the age of 40. The long hours he put

into the production of the film likely contributed to his death, and yes, back in those days people sometimes died from complications of a toothache.

Sam's death left the youngest brother, Jack, in sole charge of film production. He would remain in that position until 1969, making Jack L. Warner the undisputed boss of the studio (despite frequent quarrels with his two surviving brothers) and one of the most important people in Hollywood for more than fifty years. He was a tough guy to work for, but a shrewd business leader who kept Warner Brothers positioned as a major studio.

I also had quite a bit to say in episode 288 about Warner Brothers' celebrated animation studio with its hugely popular characters, especially Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, and Bugs Bunny. Those of you who are familiar with those cartoons probably recall how on a number of occasions, the self-important Daffy Duck becomes dissatisfied with his role in the cartoon and warns, "J.L. will hear of this!"

The "J.L." to whom he is referring when he makes those threats is studio chief Jack L. Warner. The irony here is that Jack Warner was contemptuous of his studio's animation studio. He regarded cartoons as a minor side business and once joked, "I don't even know where the hell the cartoon studio is."

He was hardly any more enthusiastic about his flesh-and-blood performers. He wouldn't have lunch with them, reportedly saying, "I don't need to look at actors when I eat." One director who worked for Jack Warner observed that other studio chiefs, such as Columbia's Harry Cohn or MGM's Louis B. Mayer could be mean, but they were mean for the sake of their studios. Jack Warner, by contrast, was "mean for the sake of meanness."

Back in the silent picture days, Warner Brothers' biggest star was not a human being. During the last war, and just after the Battle of Saint-Mihiel in September 1918, a corporal in the US Army Air Service named Lee Duncan was scouting a location for an airfield when he came across a German Army kennel that had been heavily damaged by artillery fire and abandoned by the Germans. The only dogs still alive in the kennel were a German shepherd mother and her five nursing puppies, which were so young their eyes were still shut.

Corporal Duncan took the dogs with him back to his unit and cared for them until the puppies were weaned. He then gave away the mother and three of the puppies to other soldiers, but kept two for himself and brought them back to the United States after the Armistice. One of the pair died shortly after arriving in the States; the other Duncan took back to his home in Los Angeles. He named that dog Rin Tin Tin.

Under Duncan's care, Rin Tin Tin developed into a dog that was both agile and obedient, and Duncan began to think the dog was well suited to performing in movies. He began shopping the dog around the small studios on Poverty Row. In 1922, Rin Tin Tin played a wolf in one film and a household pet in another, both small roles.

His big break came in 1923, when Warner Brothers cast him in the lead role in a film called *Where the North Begins*, where he played a dog lost in northern Canada, who is adopted first by a wolf pack and then by a French fur trapper and his girlfriend. He rescues both of them from the evil machinations of the villain, who runs the local trading post.

Where the North Begins was a big hit for Warner Brothers, which was a small and struggling studio at the time. Jack Warner signed the dog for a salary of \$1000 per week, remarking that Rin Tin Tin was more intelligent than most of the studio's human actors.

Rin Tin Tin would appear in 19 more Warner Brothers films. After Warners went into sound, a lead performer who couldn't talk became less appealing, and they let Rin Tin Tin go. He continued to make films and serials for other production companies until his death in 1932, at the age of 13. His films span the transition from silent films to films with synchronized music to part talkies to full talkies in color.

Warner Brothers' second biggest asset during this period was screenwriter Darryl F. Zanuck, born in 1902 in Wahoo, Nebraska, and no, I didn't make that up. The 15-year-old Zanuck lied about his age in 1917 to enlist in the US Army and served in France. There's another story we hear a lot in biographies of American men of this period: lying about their age to get into the Army. In my day, you told lies to get out of the Army. Go figure.

After the war, Zanuck began getting work writing scripts for silent films. He worked for Mack Sennett, the Keystone Cops guy, writing comedies, and there he met his future wife, actress Virginia Fox, no relation to the Fox of Fox Pictures. In 1924, he moved on to Warner Brothers, where he wrote over forty scripts in five years, including a couple of Rin Tin Tin films. He was promoted into management and became head of production for Warners' in 1931.

Zanuck left Warners' less than two years later, over a salary dispute with Jack Warner, ha ha. Who saw that coming? He went on to co-found his own production company, Twentieth Century Pictures. In a two-year span of time, Twentieth Century produced 19 successful films, which it released through United Artists. Following a dispute with United Artists in 1935, Twentieth Century Pictures merged with struggling studio Fox Pictures to create Twentieth Century-Fox, which Zanuck then led. Twentieth Century-Fox grew bigger than Warner Brothers, the studio he left, which must have been immensely satisfying to him. I will have more to say about Twentieth Century-Fox in a future episode.

I've already mentioned choreographer Busby Berkeley, who was born Berkeley William Enos in 1895 in Los Angeles, to a show business family. He too served in the US Army during the Great War as a lieutenant, although in his case, he didn't have to lie about his age. He was 21. In the Army, he was assigned to organize soldiers' drills. Sometimes these drills included more than a thousand soldiers at a time. He would later cite this experience as his choreographic inspiration.

After the war, he worked in theatre as an actor and a director, but soon discovered his real gift was choreography. In 1927, he choreographed the Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart musical adaptation of Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, which was a hit and made Berkeley one of the most sought-after choreographers on Broadway.

It wasn't long before Hollywood took notice of him. Samuel Goldwyn was the first producer to hire Berkeley as a choreographer in 1930, but he is best known for a string of musicals he choreographed for Warner Brothers in 1933 and 1934: *42nd Street*, *Footlight Parade*, *Gold Diggers of 1933*, *Dames*, and *Fashions of 1934*.

As you might guess from that remark about learning choreography from drilling soldiers, Berkeley's choreography was less about the skill of individual dancers and more about numbers and geometry. A typical Berkeley dance number has dozens of dancers in exotic costumes moving through a large space and creating geometric patterns. It was Berkeley who first conceived of filming the dancers from above, looking down, as their bodies formed moving kaleidoscopic patterns.

His cinematic numbers often begin on an ordinary set, then transition into a fantasy space larger than any real-world theatre, a space filled with many more dancers, often on multiple levels. Toward the end, the dance will return to a more realistic setting. He filmed his dances in long takes, with the camera often moving through the dancers, or rising above to take in those geometric patterns.

Understand that in the early days of sound, movie studios were competing primarily with live theatre. Part of the point of a Busby Berkeley dance number is to demonstrate how movies are capable of presenting dance numbers in a form and on a scale that live theatre just can't match.

Busby Berkeley's musical numbers were always glitzy, always breathtaking, and always upbeat. In other words, they were just what the American public was yearning for in the darkest days of the Great Depression. But the fad for this style of musical number faded by the mid 1930s, when rival studio RKO demonstrated that a musical dance number could be just as breathtaking and just as uplifting with only two dancers...as long as those two dancers were Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers.

Berkeley's style became less popular, but there was still a place for it into the late Thirties and during the Second World War. In 1943, he choreographed a number featuring a Portuguese-born Brazilian singer and dancer named Carmen Miranda singing a song called "Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat."

Speaking of Carmen Miranda, she came to the United States in 1939 to perform on Broadway and quickly became a famous name on stage and screen, one of the most popular entertainers in the US during the war. She was reported to have been the highest-paid woman in America in 1945. Her success is credited with popularizing Latin American music in the United States, and

it was encouraged every step of the way by the Roosevelt Administration's Office for Inter-American Affairs, established to promote economic and cultural ties between the US and Latin America.

And that number, "Lady in the Tutti-Frutti Hat," cemented in the public consciousness the image of Carmen Miranda, the "Brazil Bombshell," they called her, singing and dancing to a Latin beat while wearing a headdress made of fruit. That image persists, even in our time, eighty years later.

She had many imitators, and was parodied many times; Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck both took turns mimicking her. I'd be willing to bet that many more of you listening are familiar with some sort of imitation of Carmen Miranda than have seen a performance by the real woman.

Back home in South America, she drew criticism for presenting a "dumbed-down" version of her culture to North American audiences. Some Brazilians complained that her musical style was too much influenced by Afro-Brazilian culture. I don't know why that's a problem.

After the war, her film career faltered, but she remained a popular performer. Regrettably, she died suddenly of a heart attack in 1955, the night after filming a song-and-dance number for the NBC television series *The Jimmy Durante Show*. She was 46 years old.

In the Fifties, Busby Berkeley choreographed films starring swimmer Esther Williams, who turned to entertainment after being unable to participate in the 1940 Tokyo Olympics, which had been cancelled because of the war. After a stint in Billy Rose's Aquacade, she came to the attention of MGM film scouts and began a career in film, which included some memorable swimming/dancing/diving/water ballet numbers choreographed by Berkeley in his inimitable style.

His film career petered out afterward, but he never stopped working. In 1971, at the age of 75, he returned to Broadway to direct the revival of the 1924 musical comedy *No, No Nanette*, which became a big and influential hit. He died in 1976, at the age of 80.

At the same time Warner Brothers was making these splashy, upbeat musicals, it was also making gangster films, strangely enough, such as 1931's *Little Caesar*, starring Edward G. Robinson and *The Public Enemy* starring James Cagney. Those two films made those two actors Warners' biggest stars. The studio became noted for gritty, realistic films with social commentary, such as 1932's *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, based on a true story and starring Paul Muni along with Cagney and Robinson, a film which questioned the justice of the American legal system. 1933's *Baby Face*, starring Barbara Stanwyk, was about a woman who uses her sex appeal to manipulate men.

In 1935, Warners' released *Captain Blood*, a pirate film directed by Michael Curtiz and starring two newcomers, Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland. The film was a big success and made both of them into stars. The year 1936 saw the release of *The Petrified Forest*, another crime film,

starring Leslie Howard and Bette Davis, two of the biggest film stars of the time. More about that film in a few minutes. That same year came *Satan Met a Lady*, a detective film starring Bette Davis and directed by William Dieterle.

Warners' also released some successful biographical pictures in this period, such as 1936's *The Story of Louis Pasteur*, which won Paul Muni an Academy Award for Best Actor for his performance in the title role. The following year came *The Life of Emile Zola*, again starring Muni; this film earned the studio its first Academy Award for Best Picture. Both were directed by German expatriate director William Dieterle.

Then there was 1940's *Knut Rockne, All American*, directed by Lloyd Bacon, about the famed Notre Dame football coach, born in Voss, Norway, who died in a plane crash in 1931. Rockne was something of a national hero in the United States—and in Norway, too—and the film was hailed at the time as being the first movie to give a realistic portrayal of American football. In our time, the film is best remembered for the character of George Gipp, a real-life Notre Dame halfback and quarterback who died of pneumonia during his senior year. According to Rockne, on his deathbed Gipp told him, “Some time, Rock, when the team is up against it, when things are wrong and the breaks are beating the boys, ask them to go in there with all they’ve got and win just one for the Gipper. I don’t know where I’ll be then, Rock, but I’ll know about it, and I’ll be happy.”

Rockne used this story in the 1928 game against Army, inspiring his team to an upset victory. In the film, the role of George Gipp was played by a minor actor Warners had signed named Ronald Reagan. His performance in the deathbed scene was memorable, and led Warners to experiment with casting Reagan in more prominent roles. That didn’t work out so well, but of course Reagan went on to be elected President of the United States in 1980, and in his political career was referred to as “the Gipper” by many, including himself.

One of those experiments put Reagan alongside Errol Flynn and Olivia de Havilland in 1940's *Santa Fe Trail*. The success of *Captain Blood* had led to a series of eight adventure films starring Flynn and de Havilland, all but the last of them directed by Michael Curtiz. There was 1936's *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, 1938's *The Adventures of Robin Hood* and the romantic comedy *Four's a Crowd*. Then 1939's *Dodge City* and *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex*, with Bette Davis as Queen Elizabeth. Then *Santa Fe Trail*, a Western. Flynn had doubts as to whether moviegoers would accept him in a Western, but they did.

And finally, in 1941 came *They Died with Their Boots On*, another Western, this one without Reagan or Curtiz, but still with Flynn and de Havilland. And Flynn would make four more Westerns after that one, so he needn't have worried.

Off screen, Flynn was known for being promiscuous, careless with his money, a heavy smoker and drinker, and sometime drug user. He died of a heart attack in 1959, at the age of 50. And again, I'd bet I have more listeners familiar with the Errol Flynn parody characters of Alan

Swann in the 1982 film *My Favorite Year* or Neville Sinclair in the 1991 film *The Rocketeer* than I have listeners who are familiar with the films of Flynn himself.

[music: Strauss, *Tales of the Vienna Woods*.]

Earlier I mentioned Warners' 1936 crime film *The Petrified Forest*, starring Leslie Howard and Bette Davis. The film was based on a Broadway play with the same title, in which Howard had also played the lead. One of the other leads was played by a Broadway veteran named Humphrey Bogart, born on December 25, 1899.

In the play, Bogart portrayed Duke Mantee, a ruthless gangster based on John Dillinger. Critics hailed Bogart's performance, which came as a bit of a surprise; previously he had been cast primarily in roles where he played some shallow young rich guy in a light comedy. Legend has it that Bogart was the first actor to use the line "Tennis, anyone?" on stage. This line became a shorthand evocation of exactly the sort of character Bogart always played. Bogart himself would later refer to his early roles as "'Tennis, anyone?' parts."

Bogart as a gangster was something completely new for him, but he proved convincingly menacing, and *The Petrified Forest* was just the sort of story that was Warner Brothers' stock in trade at the time, so it was only natural that Warners' would want to do a film adaptation of the play and retain Leslie Howard in the lead role, as he was also a big film star. But Jack Warner wanted to cast Edward G. Robinson as Duke Mantee until Leslie Howard gave him an ultimatum: no Humphrey Bogart, no Leslie Howard. So Bogart got the part and *The Petrified Forest* launched his film career.

Warners' signed Bogart to a contract and cast him in gangster roles in a string of B movies. Bogart resented the typecasting, but he persevered. He later recounted that in his first 34 pictures at Warner Brothers, he was "shot in twelve, electrocuted or hanged in eight, and a jailbird in nine."

Bogart got his big break with the 1941 film *High Sierra*, directed by Raoul Walsh. After all of Warner Brothers' more bankable lead actors—Jimmy Cagney, Edward G. Robinson, Paul Muni, and George Raft—all turned down the lead role, it was offered to Bogart. It was another gangster role, but it was the lead, and this character was more complex than most of Bogart's past roles, which gave him the opportunity to show off his acting skill.

As fate would have it, that would be his final appearance as a gangster. While filming *High Sierra*, Bogart became drinking buddies with the film's screenwriter, John Huston. The two got along very well. Huston admired Bogart's acting, Bogart admired Huston's writing, and they were both heavy drinkers.

Huston wanted to become a director and had made a deal with Jack Warner. If *High Sierra* was a hit, Warner would give him a shot at directing his next screenplay himself. *High Sierra* was

indeed a hit, and Huston was given the opportunity to direct his own script of *The Maltese Falcon*, a remake of 1936's *Satan Met a Lady*, which was itself a remake of 1931's *The Maltese Falcon*, which was adapted from a detective novel by Dashiell Hammett, published in 1929. Recycling old ideas into new films is nothing new for Hollywood.

Warner wanted George Raft to play the lead character in the film, private detective Sam Spade, but Raft turned down the role because the film was a remake and because he didn't want to work with a novice director. Huston then offered the part to Bogart.

In *The Maltese Falcon*, Bogart's Sam Spade is a private investigator in San Francisco. A woman named Ruth Wonderly, played by Mary Astor, comes to Spade's office and hires him to find her missing sister, who ran off to San Francisco with a man named Floyd Thursby. But as Spade soon learns, none of this is as it seems. That very night, Spade's partner is murdered and so is Thursby. The next day, Spade discovers that the police suspect he killed Thursby and that Ruth Wonderly is not who she claims to be. In fact, she and two other criminals are competing to claim a stolen artifact, the titular Maltese Falcon, a jewel-encrusted sculpture. Spade plays the criminals off against each other, but his own motives are opaque.

The other two criminals are played by Peter Lorre, whose character is gay in the novel, but since these were the days of the Hays Code, his homosexuality could only be obliquely hinted at on screen, and Sydney Greenstreet. Greenstreet was a stage actor, who was 61 years old and weighed 300 pounds, not exactly a Hollywood look, but he had an imposing presence and an unforgettable voice, characteristics that persuaded Huston to give him the part. It was his first appearance on film.

The last line in the film is delivered by Bogart when a police officer spies a replica of the Maltese Falcon and asks Spade what it is. I used Spade's unforgettable reply as the title for today's episode. It is justly remembered as one of the greatest closing lines in film history.

What can I say about *The Maltese Falcon*? It was a huge success and it launched Humphrey Bogart into the top tier of film stars. It also launched John Huston's career as a director. It was nominated for three Academy Awards: Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay for Huston, and Best Supporting Actor for the novice Sydney Greenstreet. Even Bogart himself, who was seldom satisfied with his own films, expressed pride in this one. Time has only further burnished its reputation. It is generally regarded as perhaps the greatest detective film of all time and one of the greatest films, period. In 1998, the American Film Institute put it at number 28 on its list of the 100 greatest American films.

Bogart used the role to perfect his film persona, which was rooted in the characters he had played in those gangster films, though Sam Spade was no gangster. His characters were loners; stoic, cynical, yet vulnerable and reluctant to get emotionally involved, likely due to some past heartbreak. A Bogart character could be charming when he needed to be, strong and tough when the occasion demanded it, and had a knack for conveying contempt for someone without being

explicit about it. He never took himself too seriously, but he did live by a code of honor that was strictly his own, and which he took very seriously indeed. It might or might not line up with other peoples' ideas of virtue, but his convictions were unshakeable.

Okay, Bogart is a great actor. But he never did romance. Well, almost never. If you are familiar with *The Maltese Falcon*, you know there is a romantic subplot between Bogart and Astor, but now that he was a big star, the unanswered question was: could he play a romantic lead?

The world learned the answer the following year, 1942, when Bogart starred in *Casablanca*, directed by Michael Curtiz, which put Bogart in a film with a remarkable cast, including love interest Ingrid Bergman, who carefully studied Bogart's performance in *The Maltese Falcon* in preparation for performing scenes with him. The cast also included Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Conrad Veidt, once again Sydney Greenstreet and Peter Lorre, and African-American musician Dooley Wilson, who played Sam, the piano player. Fun fact: Although Wilson was a musician, he was not a pianist; his piano playing in the film was dubbed.

Casablanca was adapted from an unproduced script for a stage play titled *Everybody Comes to Rick's*. Bogart plays Rick Blaine, an American expatriate who operates a bar in Casablanca, in the Vichy-controlled Morocco of 1941. The clientele of the bar are a mix of German and French officials, along with a collection of refugees from a number of countries occupied by Germany, most of whom are desperately seeking passage to the neutral United States.

Rick is apolitical—neutral, as it were, like his homeland—but with an undercurrent of bitterness beneath his devil-may-care attitude. We learn the source of this bitterness when his ex, played by Bergman, reappears and entangles Rick in a plot involving the anti-Nazi resistance and stolen documents.

The film is a deft balance of romance, drama, and humor, and much of its emotional impact for audiences in 1942 stemmed from the fact that most of the actors in the film were real-life refugees from the Nazis who had escaped to America. The only native-born Americans in the cast are Bogart and Wilson, whose characters are also Americans, and Joy Page, who plays a young Bulgarian refugee in a small but moving part. Uncoincidentally, Page was Jack Warner's stepdaughter.

Nowhere is the poignancy of this multi-national cast stronger than in the famous “battle of the anthems,” a portion of the film in which a group of drunken German soldiers begin singing “Wacht am Rhein.” This so infuriates the other patrons of the bar that they launch into a spirited performance of “La Marseillaise” and drown out the Germans.

The film was well received and fairly popular, although it was not a huge hit in its own time. It received eight Academy Award nominations, including Best Actor for Bogart and Best Supporting Actor for Claude Rains. It won three awards: Best Picture, Best Director for Curtiz, and Best Adapted Screenplay.

The film's popularity only grew over time, and today it is celebrated as one of the greatest films of its era. In 1998, the American Film Institute put this film at number two on its list of greatest American films, behind only *Citizen Kane*.

Casablanca is a powerful piece of wartime propaganda, all the more effective because the propaganda arises out of the story, rather than being tacked on. The American Rick Blaine can be seen as representing America itself, as over the course of the film, he moves from studious neutrality to financing the Nazi opposition, and then at last to joining it.

The political views of studio head Jack L. Warner can be difficult to pin down. He was a lifelong Republican, but under his leadership Warner Brothers released many films in the Thirties that explored the dark side of American society. In the late Thirties, the studio broke with the Hays Code prohibition on politics by becoming the first to release anti-Nazi films, including *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*, which drew a formal protest from the German government. Warner supported the war effort and the Roosevelt Administration during the war, with pictures like *Casablanca* and 1943's *Mission to Moscow*, which presented a sympathetic view of America's wartime ally, the Soviet Union. Four years later, in 1947, Warner would find himself defending that film before the House Un-American Activities Committee.

As for Bogart, he would remain a huge film star for years to come. By 1946, he was the world's highest paid actor.

We'll have to stop there for today. I thank you for listening and I have to say this episode was a whole lot more fun for me than some of our recent episodes have been. I hope you enjoyed it too. I'd like to thank Mohamad for his kind donation, and thank you to Paul for becoming a patron of the podcast. Donors and patrons like Mohamad and Paul help cover the costs of making this show, which in turn keeps the podcast available free for everyone always, so my thanks to them and to all of you who have pitched in and helped out. If you'd like to become a patron or make a donation, you are most welcome; just visit the website, historyofthetwentiethcentury.com and click on the PayPal or Patreon buttons.

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We're in the period now where we're preparing for our son's surgery, so allow me to remind you that we are on a biweekly schedule for the time being—hopefully not too long. So I hope you'll join me in two weeks' time, here on the *History of the Twentieth Century*, as we return to the Eastern Front and Adolf Hitler finally begins his oft-delayed offensive, which proves to be A Definitive Mistake, in two weeks' time, here, on *The History of the Twentieth Century*.

Oh, and one more thing. I have to confess that I am a sucker for any film that includes a heaping portion of snappy dialog, and that certainly includes *Casablanca*. Even in our time, over 80 years after the film was released, you can hear people repeating lines from it, even if, as I'm sure is true in many cases, they don't realize what their quoting. I'm speaking of lines like these:

Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world, she walks into mine.

Here's looking at you, kid.

I am shocked, shocked, to find that gambling is going on in here!

Round up the usual suspects.

We'll always have Paris.

I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

By the way, all six of the lines I just quoted were chosen by the American Film Institute as among the top 100 quotes in American film. Out of a hundred all-time great lines, the AFI chose seven from *Casablanca*, a remarkable achievement for one film. Did I say seven? Yes, there's one more:

Play it again, Sam.

How ironic it is that of all the quotable lines in *Casablanca*, this is the one people are most likely to recognize as having originated in that film. And yet...and yet...

No one ever actually says, "Play it again, Sam," in the film. The closest anyone comes to that line is Ingrid Bergman's character, who at one point tells the piano player, "Play it, Sam. Play 'As Time Goes By.'"

That's pretty close to the misquoted "Play it again, Sam," but also take note of the fact that when this line is imitated or parodied, it is usually attributed to Humphrey Bogart's character. You often hear it delivered in an imitation Humphrey Bogart voice, although it wasn't even he who said it. It was Ilsa, his ex.

[music: Closing War Theme]