

An Actor's Director

Elia Kazan called himself a “desperate beast” in his quest to get the deepest emotions out of his cast. And in an extraordinary career that revolutionized screen acting, he usually got what he was looking for.



REAL LIFE: (opposite) Kazan, on the set of *East of Eden* (1955) with Richard Davalos and Julie Harris, believed “casting should tell the story of a film without words.” When James Dean said he couldn’t do an intense rooftop scene with Harris, Kazan took him to a restaurant and got him drunk on Chianti. (above) The story of Kazan’s uncle who grew up in Turkey and came to this country at the end of the 19th century, *America, America* (1963) was the director’s most personal and favorite of his films.







ABOVE WATER: *Wild River* (1960), an underappreciated '30s period piece shot in CinemaScope in the Tennessee Valley, featured scalding performances from Montgomery Clift and Lee Remick. It was one of Kazan's most lyrical and sexually charged films.



REVOLUTIONARY: In *Viva Zapata!* (1952), Kazan pitted Marlon Brando against co-star Anthony Quinn to get the performances he wanted. "It was a well-directed picture. I had worked very hard in preparation. That was the first picture I did where I felt I can really be a good director."

PHOTOS: (TOP) WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY CINEMA ARCHIVES; (BOTTOM) BISON ARCHIVES



STAGE LEFT: Kazan shot *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951), starring Karl Malden and Vivien Leigh, on the Warner Bros. lot in 36 days. “*Streetcar* is a beautiful theatre piece that I shot without softening it, filming it as it was because there was nothing to change.”



NO FUN: MGM forced Kazan to shoot *The Sea of Grass* (1947) on the lot and use rear projection for the background. Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn liked working with him, but Kazan hated the film. “My dreams of doing a John Ford Western were destroyed.”

PHOTOS: (TOP) PHOTOFEST; (BOTTOM) AMPAS



PROPHETIC: In *A Face in the Crowd* (1957), Kazan warned Andy Griffith, who was making his film debut as a hayseed turned media star, that he "may have to use extraordinary means to make you do this. I may have to get out of line." It was also the first film for Lee Remick.



UP ON THE ROOF: Kazan prepares a scene for *On the Waterfront* (1954) on location in Hoboken, N.J., with Marlon Brando and Eva Marie Saint. For Kazan, it was a perfect shoot, a film made in exactly the way he had hoped for since the beginning of his career.



TOUGH GUY: Based on his own novel about a self-destructive ad man whose life is coming apart, Kazan encouraged Kirk Douglas to raise the intensity of his performance in *The Arrangement* (1969). The director originally wanted Marlon Brando for the role.



CRIBBING: Caroll Baker played a child bride trapped in an unconsummated marriage in *Baby Doll* (1956). Working from a Tennessee Williams screenplay, Kazan felt he was “really able to put the atmosphere of the South” into it.



MOGUL: Kazan working with Robert De Niro and Ingrid Boulting on his final film, *The Last Tycoon* (1976), from the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel about producer Irving Thalberg. De Niro was “the only actor who asked to rehearse on Sundays. Most of the others play tennis.”



LOST LOVE: Warren Beatty (in his film debut) and Natalie Wood played star-crossed lovers in a Kansas town in the '20s in *Splendor in the Grass* (1961). Wood had a deep fear of water, but Kazan coaxed her into doing a drowning scene.