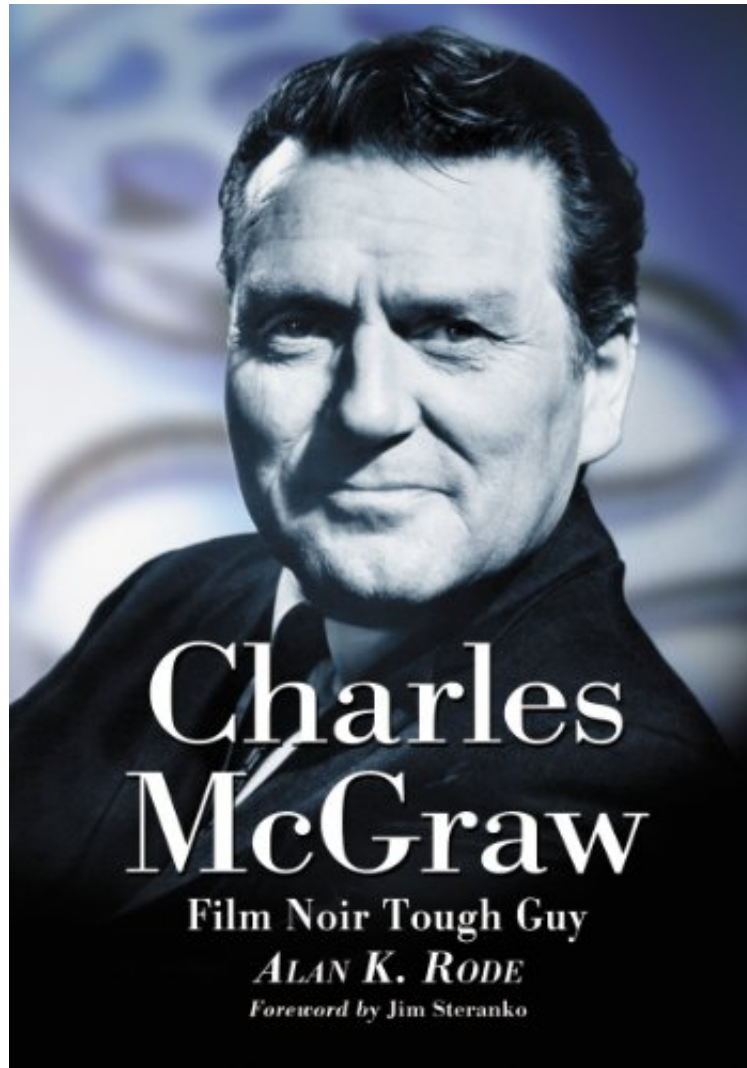


[Download pdf ebook] Charles McGraw: Biography of a Film Noir Tough Guy

## Charles McGraw: Biography of a Film Noir Tough Guy

*Alan K. Rode*

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**Alan K. Rode : Charles McGraw: Biography of a Film Noir Tough Guy** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Charles McGraw: Biography of a Film Noir Tough Guy:

37 of 38 people found the following review helpful. Movie News: Charles McGraw- Biography of a Film Noir Tough GuyBy Vintage Film BuffCharles McGraw: Biography of a Film Noir Tough Guy (McFarland) relates the startling life of the memorable character actor against the backdrop of the old Hollywood studio system through anti-trust divestiture and the rise of television into the modern era of filmmaking.Rode examines McGraw's lengthy acting career that began when he hitchhiked to New York at the height of the Great Depression and landed a key role in the hit play Golden Boy alongside such Group Theatre luminaries as Luther Adler, John Garfield and Elia Kazan.With his

rough hewn profile, stocky build and guttural growl, Rode explains how Charles McGraw's acting ushered in a new post war era of authentic screen toughness. After getting his big break from producer Mark Hellinger in *The Killers* (1946), McGraw parlayed subsequent roles into a starring contract at RKO in 1950. Rode writes about the evolution of RKO Studios as the "Capital of Noir" dating back to *Citizen Kane* (1941), the Val Lewton pictures and other classic films including *Crossfire*, *Out of the Past* and *Blood on the Moon*. Rode explains that the distinctive RKO style was more the result of extraordinarily talented cinematographers, such as Nicholas Musaraca, and RKO craft department experts than any specific directorial auteur. Rode also details the destruction of RKO Studios as a major filmmaking entity due to the bizarre behavior of Howard Hughes who bought the studio in 1948. Even though Charles McGraw would star in acclaimed second features such as *The Threat*, *Armored Car Robbery* and *The Narrow Margin*, and was hailed as the next Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas, he was forced to vacate his contract in 1952 in order to find work as a freelance actor. As chronicled by Rode, Charles McGraw's hard-won success during the mid-1950's, appearing in *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1956) and starring in two television series, became dissipated by the actor's nihilistic life-style. McGraw's long-term drinking problem resulted in a life filled with promise gradually morphing into a noir-stained tragedy. Rode documents McGraw's tumultuous personal life from his earliest days in Ohio, his long term marriage with a Eurasian beauty, being stalked by the FBI for alleged Communist ties, through his cinematic comeback in *In Cold Blood* to his bizarre death. He writes with great detail and passion about an era of stuntmen, cowboys and other irrepressible characters that lived and worked in Studio City, California when the town had a movie studio, a stoplight, and more than a few bars. We see Charles McGraw as a superb acting craftsman who was a beloved Damon Runyon character, dubbed as "King Charles", but who was actually an inwardly nervous man whose angst was deliberately obscured by the tall tales, bravado and barroom camaraderie. Alan K. Rode gives us an intimate biography of a familiar, yet heretofore obscure actor, a wonderful narrative history of Hollywood and an incisive look at the evolution of the film noir style. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. this is a wonderful combination of everything that can be found about "Charlie" ...By rickkthis is a wonderful combination of everything that can be found about "Charlie" McGraw weaved within the context of film noir. a well written treatise on both with stories about all the players in the genre which really cannot be found elsewhere so cogently. a very satisfying "read". 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent! By Art La Cues The author, Alan K. Rode, has written a biography that is interesting, objective, and not only conveys the story of Charles McGraw, the man and the actor, but also provides a parallel narrative of how Hollywood changed during McGraw's four decades of acting. His use of primary sources and interviews with Charles' contemporaries provide an authenticity that makes for a compelling story. Alan has a writing style which holds the reader's attention. A well written book about an outstanding actor.

The iconic actor Charles McGraw appeared in over 140 roles on films and television, including the classic noir pictures *The Killers* (1946) and *The Narrow Margin* (1952). Whether portraying tough cops or sadistic killers, McGraw brought a unique authenticity to the screen. Emphasizing his impact on the film noir style, this comprehensive biography examines McGraw's lengthy career against the backdrop of a changing Hollywood. Through numerous personal interviews with his surviving intimates, close acquaintances and co-workers, his tumultuous personal life is detailed from his earliest days to his bizarre, accidental death. Also included are an extensive critical filmography of McGraw's feature film career, a complete list of television appearances and previously unpublished film stills and personal photos.

"Rode can honestly be called an expert on the film noir genre. He is one of our most important film historians and it can be safely stated that anything this man writes is gold...a total must-read. Rode is a natural writer with a genuine love of film...absolutely riveting...I highly recommend this book...well-written, long overdue biography...a first-rate book...sensational...Alan is a highly knowledgeable researcher with a good eye for what's important in a biography and an excellent, readable writer who clearly loves film and seeks out his subject's work to authoritatively discuss it." -- Classic Images "Amazing detail." --Canyon News "Very little, if anything, seems to be left out...an incredible history lesson for movie enthusiasts. The only thing that confuses us is how Rode managed to fit such a wealth of information in just under 230 pages. We chalk it up to great writing!" --Gary Sweeney, *The Midnight Palace* About the Author Film historian and journalist Alan K. Rode is a director of the Film Noir Foundation. He lives in Los Angeles.