

On the Waterfront

By Suzy Hopkins

On the Waterfront was based on a series of articles published in November and December of 1948 in the *New York Sun* called "Crime on the Waterfront" which won the 1949 Pulitzer Prize for Local Reporting.

The film focuses on union violence and corruption amongst longshoremen on the waterfronts of Hoboken, New Jersey.

This movie was considered "culturally, historically or aesthetically significant" by the Library of Congress. It was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry.

That's not why it is my favorite. The story is tragic from beginning to end. The characters are beautifully cast. Marlon Brando played a former boxer (Terry Malloy) who threw a fight to impress the powerful union boss John Friendly (played by Lee J. Cobb) who controlled where Terry worked and whether he worked at all on a daily basis. One of the longshoremen, Joey, is killed just before he is to testify against the union boss. Terry had been sent there as a decoy which enabled the murderers to get to Joey. Terry hadn't realized he was a decoy but is tormented by this. Joey's sister blames Terry for her brother's murder. Terry tries to apologize and falls hard for Joey's pretty sister (played by Eva Marie Saint). The local priest (played by Karl Malden) tries to save everybody while getting them to testify against the boss. Now the boss won't hire these men and things go from bad to worse.

I won't tell you any more of the plot which would ruin it when you watch it yourself.

I think having been shot in black and white makes the characters appear more intense and believable in their scenes.

This movie is a masterpiece: perfect casting, photography, script, acting, plot and music.

Don't take my word for it. This movie won 12 awards including 1955 Academy Awards for Best Picture, Best Director (Elia Kazan), Best Actor (Marlon Brando), Best Supporting Actor (Karl Malden), Best Supporting Actress (Eva Marie Saint in her first acting part in a film), Best Score (Leonard Bernstein), Best Film Editing and Cinematography plus four Golden Globe Awards.