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Backstory 2: Interviews With Screenwriters of the 1940's and 1950's

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From Univ of California Pr : Backstory 2: Interviews With Screenwriters of the 1940's and 1950's before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Backstory 2: Interviews With Screenwriters of the 1940's and 1950's:

"Backstory" is the screenwriter's term for what happens in a plot before the screen story begins. In this companion volume to McGilligan's widely praised Backstory: Interviews with Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age, fourteen studio scribes active in later decades rail and reminisce about their fifty-plus years of inventing and scripting movies. Richard Brooks, Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon, Arthur Laurents, Ben Maddow, Stewart Stern, Daniel Taradash, and Philip Yordan are among the distinguished figures included. The 1940s were a period of transition for the motion picture industry, from an era of hope and glory and the upheavals of World War II to a postwar era of caution and confusion. The 1950s brought a great decline in the number of films produced and led to the extinction of that peculiar creature, the contract writer. The survivors of Hollywood's most productive years remain wonderfully talkative, however. In this lively collection of interviews they contribute useful writing tips, radical correctives to screen history and industry folklore, and just plain fascinating gossip. As a whole, the interviews provide a compelling biographical close-up of an entire generation of men and women whose talent, vision, and tenacity were critical to the institution we know as "Hollywood."

.com Backstory 2, the second volume of interviews with Hollywood's legendary screenwriters, covers those who thrived in the 1940s and '50s. It was a tumultuous period for the film industry, a time often referred to as Hollywood's golden age, even though it was also the era of the blacklist. Scenarists were hit particularly hard by McCarthyism: eight of the famous "Hollywood Ten" were writers. The focus of this rich volume is aptly summarized in the introduction by editor Patrick McGilligan: "There are updates on the studios and the chieftains of the 1940s and '50s; vignettes of directors (like [George] Cukor) who respected the script and others (like [Howard] Hawks) who fiddled with it; glimpses and anecdotes of eminent colleagues, including an assortment of tales about Faulkner, insights into the tricks, traps, and technology of films; philosophy about the illusions and realities of the craft." From Publishers Weekly Fourteen Hollywood screenwriters relive the 1940s and '50s--an era of political turmoil, massive studio layoffs and rising aesthetic production values--in these sparkling interviews, a sequel to Backstory. Arthur Laurents asserts that the blacklist made "Hollywood what it is today, cardboard people running around on Styrofoam." Ben Maddow, blacklisted in 1952, speaks out for the first time about his role as HUAC cooperative witness. Walter Reisch reminisces about working with Darryl Zanuck, Louis B. Mayer and Ernst Lubitsch. Leigh Brackett, who adapted Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* to the screen, calls that novel "a confusing book." Other interviewees include Betty Comden, Adolph Green, Garson Kanin, fantasist Curt Siodmak, Philip Yordan and Dorothy Kingsley. This treasure trove is an irresistible mix of film lore, behind-the-scenes history, gossip and shoptalk. Photos. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal The modest success of Backstory: Interviews with Screenwriters of Hollywood's Golden Age (LJ 12/15/86) has spawned this sequel. There aren't many household names here (Betty Comden and Adolph Green are the best known). McGilligan conducted many of the interviews himself. The recurring theme is frustration: with a system that's collaborative in nature and leads to all kinds of miscredited work (which McGilligan valiantly tries to straighten out in filmographies); with directors who get all the glamor press; and with the witch-hunters whose zealotry ruined many lives and careers. Arthur Laurents, who authored the original screenplay for *The Way We Were*, is perhaps the most frustrated of all, and in this collection's most entertaining interview he sums it all up: "Don't you understand?! No writer has any say about a movie!" Recommended for medium and large film collections.- Tom Wiener, formerly with " American Film, " Washington, D.C. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.