

WEEK 33, 2020

THE EPOCH TIMES  
**ARTS &  
CULTURE**

OLD ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE



The Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London, where hundreds of figures feature in Sir James Thornhill's paintings celebrating Britain's monarchs and its naval and merchant might.

***Majesties, Myth, and Naval Might Galore***  
in Britain's Painted Hall ...4

# What Our Readers Say:

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STAN K., PASTOR

“It’s bringing morality back to newspapers.”  
LISSA T., BUSINESS OWNER

“It’s the only paper that I know of right now that actually gives you the honest, old fashioned journalism.”  
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JUNE V., RETIRED BANKER



**THE EPOCH TIMES**  
TRUTH AND TRADITION



# A Mirror for Our Time

JEFF MINICK

Meet Laura Taninger. Laura is the heroine of Gen LaGreca’s political thriller “Just the Truth,” an investigative reporter and president of the news division of Taninger Enterprises.

Founded as a newspaper nearly 70 years ago by Laura’s grandfather, Julius Taninger, the paper and the other media outlets of Taninger Enterprises have always abided by the motto engraved in stone over the entrance to its headquarters: “Find the truth wherever it hides.” Laura’s grandfather exemplified those words in his actions, his reporting, and his editorials, and passed that ideal of truth-telling, no matter the consequences, to his children and to Laura.

### Truth Versus Lies

But changes in politics and journalism have brought Laura and her firebrand sister, Kate, editor of a conservative college newspaper, into conflict with their father and two siblings. All of them sit on the board of Taninger Enterprises. Under the threat of advertisers lost because of controversy and a behind-the-scenes government crackdown, Clark and two of his children, Irene and Billie, want Laura to retreat from her investigation of a major story.

And the story? Laura has become suspicious about the Voting Fairness Act, which gives the federal government the

power to take the place of states in tabulating votes for federal elections and to use an electronic system for counting those votes. As she digs into financial discrepancies of the money budgeted for this system, one of her sources is murdered, various divisions of Taninger Enterprises come under federal investigation, and Kate is the victim of threats both from a mob on campus and from college officials.

On her nightly news broadcast, “Just the Truth,” Laura refuses to back down and continues to air the evidence she uncovers revealing possible fraud in the new voting system. Harassed by the government and other news media, Clark, Irene, and Billie eventually demand that Laura either abandon the story or step down from her positions as broadcaster and news division president.

### A Mirror for Our Present Unrest

Meanwhile, young Kate Taninger is undergoing her own trial by fire. When Kate publishes an editorial in her college newspaper defending her sister’s investigation, she finds herself set upon by violent protesters. These radicals are paid by a private group, but with the connivance of deep-state employees linked to the administration of Ken Martin, the United States president.

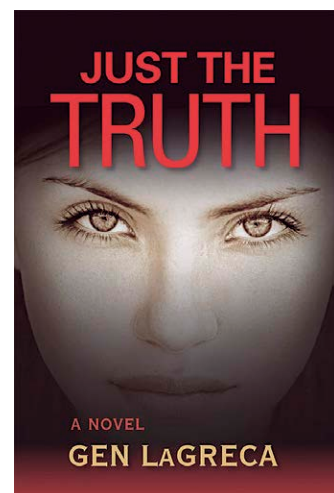
Collier University’s other student newspaper, joined by mainstream news media, also launches an attack on Kate and Laura. Like her sister, Kate soon finds herself facing a life-changing choice: either retract and apologize for

her editorial or risk being booted out of the university.

Given the pandemic and the socialist mobs that today dominate our news, we must wonder what crystal ball LaGreca consulted while writing her novel. The plot and themes of “Just the Truth” could not be more pertinent to that news and our current unrest. Here we see the corruption of our politics, the machinations of the “deep state,” the growing threat of federal agencies to private enterprise, and the constant calls to change our way of voting. Here too we see the means by which mobs “spontaneously” appear out of nowhere to attack free speech and American liberty, and the misinformation and sometimes downright deception provided to us via “fake news.”

### The Breitbart Doctrine Add-On

By now, some readers may be scratching their heads and thinking: “OK, Jeff

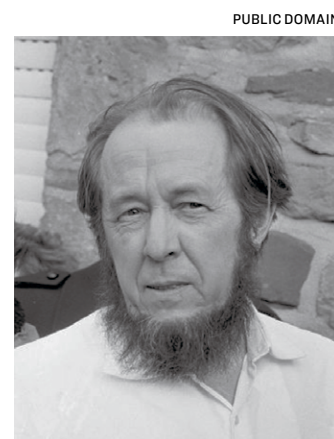


### ‘Just the Truth’

Gen LaGreca  
Winged Victory Press  
238 pages, paperback

(Left) Author Gen LaGreca.

(Far Left) The unrest of the cultural revolution in America in the 1960s is the tide that informs today’s events. Anti-Vietnam protesters surround a police car outside the 1968 Democratic National Convention in Chicago.



Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn lost his Soviet citizenship because he spoke out against the evil empire.

Minick, we get the gist of this novel, written by an author unfamiliar to many of us, but what on earth does this book have to do with Arts & Culture? Let’s take a look.

Andrew Breitbart, a well-known conservative writer now deceased, was famous for his Breitbart doctrine, the notion that “politics is downstream from culture.” By this he meant that our politics are shaped by popular culture. The culture of Weimar Germany helped bring about Nazism; the American culture of the 1960s and 1970s is the grandparent of our current political disorder.

But Breitbart’s doctrine fails to recognize another development. To employ a different metaphor, let me suggest that when politics gains the saddle and seizes the reins, culture becomes the horse and not the rider. For the past century, whenever dictatorial governments came to power, culture has acted as a handmaiden of the state. In Hitler’s Germany, Stalin’s Russia, Mussolini’s Italy, Castro’s Cuba, and elsewhere, art and culture became tools of propaganda used to glorify the ruling party. In these cases, culture is downstream from politics.

In some instances, politics has sought to eradicate culture. The Chinese Cultural Revolution attempted to erase thousands of years of traditional Chinese arts and social practices. In the 1970s, the Khmer Rouge instituted the “killing fields” and tried to wipe out traditional Cambodian culture. In America today, we are witnessing “cancel culture” along with mobs intent on toppling statues of historic figures and wiping out wholesale certain men, women, and events from our history.

When politics governs culture, ordinary citizens become afraid to speak their minds. The Soviets imprisoned and then banished Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Thomas Mann fled Hitler’s Germany, and millions of others in the last hundred years, most of them ordinary people, died in camps at the hands of fascists and communists, often for dissident viewpoints or “incorrect” thinking.

Here in the land of the free, we have created an American way to shut people down. The barbed wire and iron bars of our gulags are electronic, and we keep

our fellow citizens in line through the threats of doxing, cancel culture, and savage mob attacks on platforms like Twitter. According to a recent Pew poll, 62 percent of Americans now practice self-censorship while at work or on social media, afraid to speak their minds for fear that assaults by others may cost them social status, friends, and even their jobs.

### What crystal ball did LaGreca consult while writing her novel?

### It Can Happen Here

Which brings us back to “Just the Truth.” In LaGreca’s tale, we see what happens when investigative journalists bring their political prejudices rather than objectivity to a story; we see how the left uses words like “bigot” and “racist” as weapons; we see the evil that occurs when truth goes out the window, when corrupt politicians arbitrarily exercise their power, and when citizens are bludgeoned into silence by the politically correct.

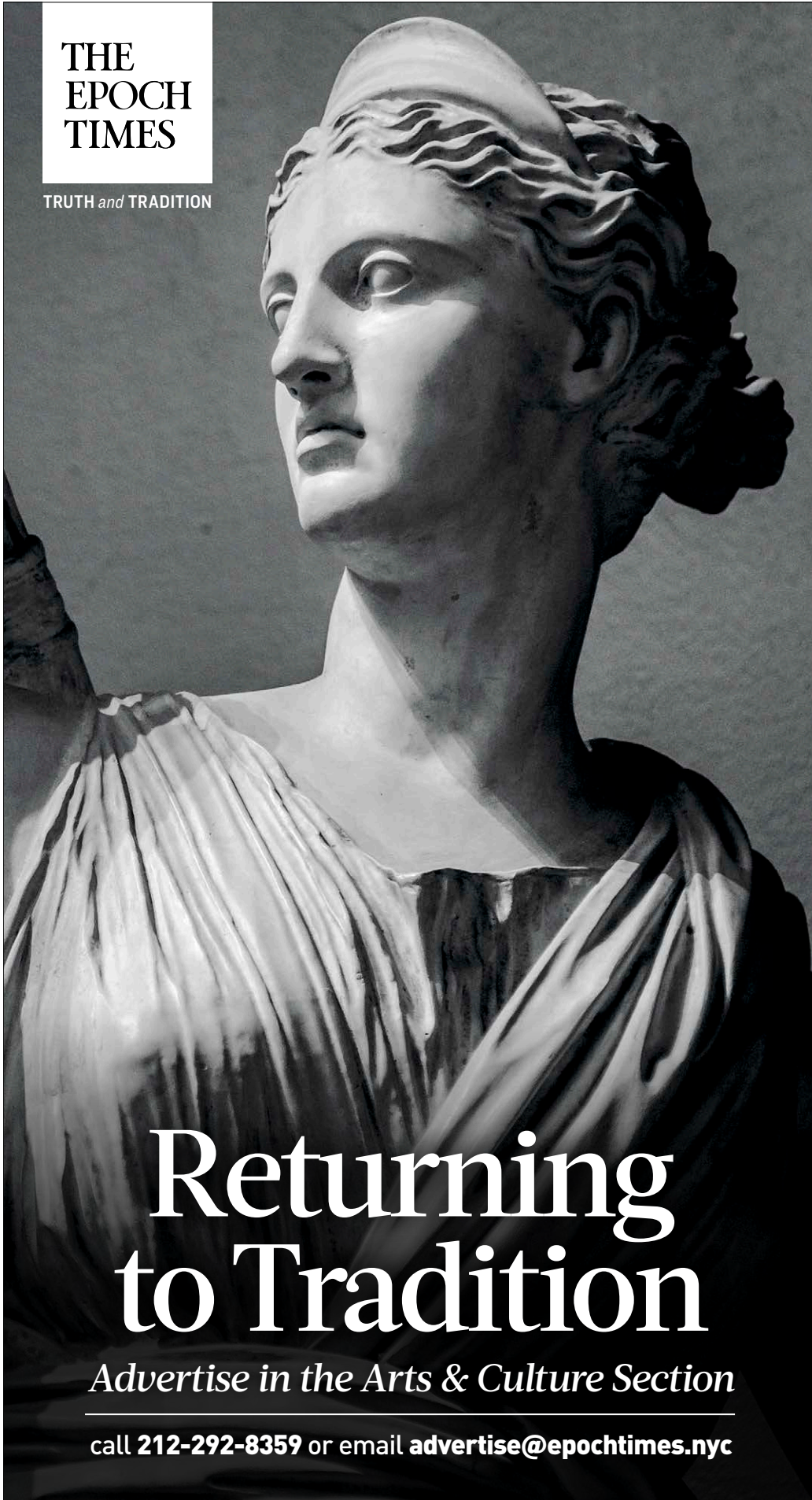
Surely, few of us ever believed that America could become a leftist dictatorship. Even now, when some of our governors and mayors issue rules and regulations as if they were all-powerful potentates, or allow riots to continue unchecked in places like Portland, many of us think it can’t happen here.

But it can happen here. It is happening here. And we need more real-life Laura Taningers to find the truth wherever it hides and to keep the spotlight of that truth shining brightly on those out to destroy our culture, our country, and our liberty.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See [JeffMinick.com](http://JeffMinick.com) to follow his blog.

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TRUTH and TRADITION



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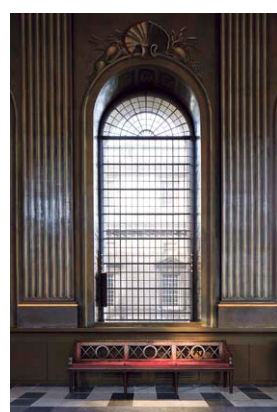
Cancel Culture: A Chinese poster in late 1966 showing how to deal with a so-called enemy of the people during the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution.



## FINE ARTS

## Majesties, Myth, and Naval Might Galore in Britain's Painted Hall

(Above) The upper hall of the Painted Hall in Greenwich, London, depicts King George surrounded by his family to show the strength of his reign and the solidity of the Protestant line.



Astounding architecture can be seen inside the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College in Greenwich, London, the majority of it being actual paintings. Decorative painter James Thornhill used a technique called "trompe l'oeil" ("trick the eye") to give the illusion of architectural features such as these columns.



The proscenium arch connects the lower and upper Painted Hall. On the arch's ceiling are the allegorical signs of the zodiac representing the constellations the seamen used for navigation.

## LORRAINE FERRIER

GREENWICH, London—Just as seamen looked to the heavens to navigate their sea voyages, visitors to the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College can look up at the painted ceiling and walls to navigate Britain's early 18th-century history.

Decorative artist James Thornhill was commissioned to paint the grand dining hall for the Royal Hospital for Seamen, now known as the Old Royal Naval College. He painted a scheme that showed Britain's growing wealth, prosperity, and naval might.

Thornhill "was the only British painter of his day to understand and successfully to emulate the European formulas for wall and ceiling painting and was the only native English painter who could challenge on their own ground the many foreign decorative painters then at work in England," according to the Oxford Dictionary of Art. Thornhill's 40,000 square feet of paintings in the Painted Hall, and his paintings in the dome of London's St. Paul's Cathedral—all within two iconic buildings by pre-eminent architect Sir Christopher Wren—are considered Thornhill's masterpieces.

### The Importance of History Painting

In 18th-century Britain, history paintings (like those in the Painted Hall) were considered the highest genre of painting.

"As to paint a History, a Man ought to have the main qualities of a good Historian, and something more; he must yet go higher, and have the Talents requisite to be a good poet; the rules for the Conduct of a Picture being much the same with those to be observed in writing a poem," notes art historian William Vaughan in his book "British Painting: The Golden Age." Vaughan quotes from Jonathan Richardson's 1715 "Essay on the Theory of Painting."

The poetry Richardson refers to are the epic poems like those Homer and Virgil told.

The elements of epic poetry that relate to history painting can be

found in "A Handbook to Literature" by William Harmon and C. Hugh Holman. An epic is "a long narrative poem in elevated style presenting characters of high position in adventures forming an organic whole through their relation to a central heroic figure and through their development of episodes important to the history of a nation or race."

Each epic painting in the Painted Hall is a proclamation of Britain's Protestant rule, with the central heroic figure or figures being the monarchy, and every detail reinforces the importance of these great reigns.

### The Need for British History Painting

In the early 18th century, Britain didn't have a strong tradition of history painting to follow because, Vaughan says, there was no training or patronage to sustain a school. Protestant Britain didn't have a rich tradition of royal court painters, nor did it have patronage from the church as Catholic countries did. British painting began to change in the early 18th century when the Protestant monarchy needed to convey its strength.

The late 17th and early 18th centuries were times of immense change for England. In 1688, William of Orange (the Dutch prince) took the throne as William III (along with his wife, Princess Mary) from his Catholic father-in-law, King James II. William and Mary jointly ruled Britain. And from their reign onward, as Parliament stipulated in the 1689 Bill of Rights, Roman Catholics were forbidden to ascend the throne because "it hath been found by experience that it is inconsistent with the safety and welfare of this protestant kingdom to be governed by a papist prince."

William's priority overseas was to contain the expansion of Britain's powerful enemy: France. The two countries differed in their beliefs. France was an absolute Catholic monarchy and Britain a Protestant constitutional monarchy. England and Holland fought together in the Nine Years' War against France from 1689–1697. The painting of

the Painted Hall began just after this tumultuous period.

Over the 19 years that Thornhill painted the hall, between 1707 and 1726, Britain experienced three reigns: those of King William III (1689–1702) and Queen Mary II (1689–1694), Queen Anne (1702–1714), and King George (1714–1727).

### 'The Triumph of Peace and Liberty Over Tyranny'

William and Mary are celebrated as the founders of the Royal Hospital for Seamen, as depicted in the ellipse, the lower hall's central painting and everything in it reinforces the glory of the monarchy as related to its title: "The Triumph of Peace and Liberty Over Tyranny."

The king and queen take center stage in the ellipse. Queen Mary confidently holds a staff and looks directly out of the painting. Peace, dressed in white with two doves by her side, tentatively approaches William, who takes the olive branch from her hand. Both Peace and William use their right hands, echoing the tradition of the handshake.

Under William's right leg Louis XIV, king of France, cowers as he holds a broken sword and appears to be crushed. France was the most powerful country in continental Europe at the time, an enemy that Britain feared.

William holds the red cap of Liberty (the Phrygian cap) in his left hand. Europe, who kneels on William's left side, reaches out toward the cap, which could suggest that William believes he is freeing Europe from France's tyranny. And perhaps the fact that William takes the olive branch from Peace first indicates that peace must be accepted before freedom can be declared.

Mythological figures surround the monarchs, all to highlight their strength. In the top third of the ellipse, the Greek sun god Apollo stands in his chariot to the heavens, bringing light to the world and to the painting as he chases off a cherub holding a water jug that represents the morning dew.

In Greek mythology, Apollo en-

joyed founding towns and cities and establishing civil institutions. Additionally, Apollo protects the kingdom by warding off evil and helping those in need. All these are important qualities for any righteous rule—to extend the empire and to uphold goodness.

Below Apollo and just above the royals are the four cardinal virtues: Justice holds a sword, Prudence holds the golden jug, Temperance holds a mirror, and Fortitude holds a stone column.

At the bottom of the painting, the Greek mythological warriors Hercules (with his club) and Pallas Athena (decked in her helmet, shield, and staff), together use their strength and wisdom to protect the virtue of the kingdom by expelling vices.

### British Naval Might:

**18th-Century Past and Present** On either side of the central ceiling painting, "The Triumph of Peace and Liberty Over Tyranny," are two scenes showing Britain's naval strength. Naval power was of the utmost importance to Britain's expanding empire.

The lower hall's east painting shows a captured Spanish galleon with the spoils of war, symbolic of Britain's capture of Gibraltar in 1704 in the War of the Spanish Succession. In the painting, the moon goddess Diana, who oversees the tides, hands down the necessary tidal knowledge to the royal seamen. Thornhill also painted allegories of Britain's important trade rivers.

The age's great astronomers and scientists feature in the painting, such as Isaac Newton with his "Principia," principles of natural philosophy. And the first royal astronomer, John Flamsteed (1646–1719), the founder of the Greenwich Observatory, holds an astronomy chart predicting a future solar eclipse (painted before the predicted date). Fortunately, Flamsteed's prediction was accurate.

The other lower-hall painting displays Britain's emerging naval strength. The HMS *Blenheim*, a British Man-of-War, is seen with the winged figure Victory. Galileo



The Greek god Apollo stands in his chariot as he chases off a cherub, which represents the morning dew, to bring light to the world, in a detail of the painting "The Triumph of Peace and Liberty Over Tyranny."

Perhaps the fact that William takes the olive branch from Peace first indicates that peace must be accepted before freedom can be declared.

Queen Mary II and King William III surrounded by allegories indicative of a successful reign, in a detail from the painting "The Triumph of Peace and Liberty Over Tyranny," at the Painted Hall in Greenwich, London.



features here, for his astronomical discoveries and work in improving the telescope.

The City of London is represented by a handsome woman with a sword and shield. London is supported by a man, who symbolizes the River Thames, and a woman, the River Isis, the upper part of the Thames. Below them, the River Tyne pours coal into a golden bowl: The Royal Hospital was reliant on coal tax, and London was reliant on coal brought by sea from the Tyne.

### A Show of Strength

On the ceiling of the proscenium arch that connects the lower hall and upper hall are the allegorical signs of the zodiac. The figures represent the constellations famil-

iar to the seamen as they navigated by the stars on their voyages.

It's in the upper hall that the three generations of Protestant monarchs come together, almost in a show of strength, as if to say that George, then king, appreciated all that came before him.

Throughout the Painted Hall but particularly in the upper hall, Thornhill impressively used gray-tone paintings called grisaille to imitate stone sculptures, and also painted the most spectacular "trompe l'oeil" ("trick the eye"), where astounding classical architecture appears as if solid.

On the west wall, Thornhill painted splendid classical architecture that stretches up to the heavenly realms. An inscription in Latin from Virgil's "Ec-

logues" appears on the top stone announcing: "A new generation has descended from the heavens," introducing the new Hanoverian dynasty led by George I. George ascended to the throne after Queen Anne died heirless, despite 50 Catholics who were in line to the throne before him.

In the painting, in a deliberate display of strength, George is surrounded by his family, the future successors to the throne, showing the solidity of the Protestant line. George's mother, Sophie of Hanover, who died just two months prior to Queen Anne's death, is honored in the painting with a mural crown (a crown representing the city or its boundaries) indicating that she's the protector of the realm.

Everything in this painting indicates Britain's future wealth under George's reign. A figure leans on a cornucopia overflowing with gold; the iconic St. Paul's Cathedral, designed by Wren and the dome painted by Thornhill, features prominently in the background. A figure to the right holds a trident, symbol of the sea, and points to a scroll naming all the naval victories from the Spanish Armada in 1558 to the defeat of the Spanish fleet in 1718.

And to the right, Thornhill puts himself in the painting, gesturing as if to introduce the whole scene. Before he'd even finished the commission, he gained knighthood, becoming Sir James Thornhill, the first artist to receive this honor.



The central painting in the lower Painted Hall, titled "The Triumph of Peace and Liberty Over Tyranny," features King William III (1650–1702) and Queen Mary II (1662–1694), the founders of the Royal Hospital for Seamen. On either side of the central painting are scenes of Britain's naval might.

ALL PHOTOS BY OLD ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE

To find out more about the Painted Hall at the Old Royal Naval College, take the virtual tour at [VirtualTour.ORNCo.org](http://VirtualTour.ORNCo.org)





REWIND, REVIEW, AND RE-RATE

# A BEAUTIFULLY CRAFTED NOIR CLASSIC

IAN KANE

Considered by many to be one of the greatest film noir classics of all time, “The Maltese Falcon” disappointed me when I first saw it as a kid. Scenes seemed to drag on forever with just too much dialogue to endure. Its dense, twisty plot confused my youthful brain. As an adult, I appreciate exactly what makes this seminal cinematic work so special.

For one thing, it was the first film directed by legendary filmmaker John Huston. His 1941 film was actually a remake of a 1931 version with the same name. The 1931 version was produced before the Motion Picture Production Code (which ran from 1934 to 1968) cleaned up the raciness and smut associated with cinema before and after its enforcement.

Huston, who’d only written screenplays up to that point, wanted to make a big splash in the film industry. In this effort, he pulled out all the stops and used some unique techniques, such as meticulously setting up each shot until he deemed it perfect.

In the film, Humphrey Bogart plays the hard-nosed private detective Sam Spade, who owns a P.I. agency along with his partner, Miles Archer (Jerome Cowan). While Spade is sitting in his San Francisco-based office one day, a mysterious woman named Ruth Wonderly (Mary Astor) walks in pleading for help. Apparently, her sister has recently been seduced by a local fellow named Floyd



WARNER BROS

Thursby and has gone missing.

Archer walks into the office while she’s filling in the details, and he volunteers to track down her sister, despite her warning the two private detectives that Mr. Thursby is a menacing man prone to fits of violence. The only information she has is a possible location where her sister and Thursby might be meeting later.

When Archer shows up on a darkened street corner near the purported location where Wonderly’s sister and Thursby were to meet, he is suddenly gunned down by an unknown assailant.

After his partner’s murky demise, Spade becomes involved in the plots by multiple criminal elements who are hunting for an avian statuette known as the Mal-

tese Falcon, an insanely valuable artifact. Indeed, as the film states:

“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 the priceless token and the fate of the Maltese Falcon remains a mystery to this day.”

No wonder everybody wants to get their grubby mitts on the Maltese Falcon! Everybody includes the calculating criminal Kasper “Fat Man” Gutman (Sydney Greenstreet) and an equally bad dude, the mercenary cutthroat Joel Cairo (Peter Lorre). As Spade tries to outwit these bad guys, he also has to stay one step ahead of the local San Francisco cops, who

(L-R) Mary Astor, Humphrey Bogart, and Jerome Cowan in “The Maltese Falcon.”

## ‘The Maltese Falcon’

**Director**  
John Huston

**Starring**  
Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Gladys George, Peter Lorre, Sydney Greenstreet

**Running Time**  
1 hour, 40 minutes

**Not Rated**

**Release Date**  
Oct. 18, 1941 (USA)

★★★★★

**The Maltese Falcon** was the first film directed by legendary filmmaker John Huston.

suspect him of Archer’s murder.

Huston also wrote the intriguingly complex screenplay, which holds the film firmly together for its entire 100-minute runtime. It is filled to the brim with all sorts of plot twists and turns, reversals of fortune, and dastardly double-crosses. In fact, there were so many interesting subplots—such as Archer’s widow, Iva (Gladys George), trying to put the moves on Spade—that I wouldn’t have minded the film’s being a half hour or so longer to further develop or resolve them.

The acting is profoundly excellent. Bogie was perfectly cast as a highly resourceful detective with a sensitive heart somewhere beneath his tough veneer. His character would later become an archetype that many actors would emulate.

Mary Astor is fantastic as a seemingly vulnerable bombshell with some dark secrets. And a special mention must go to Sydney Greenstreet, who made his film debut here at the tender age of 61 and was even nominated for an Academy Award (Best Actor in a Supporting Role) for his outstanding performance.

Although some critics consider “The Maltese Falcon” to be overrated, I think it is the opposite. With its unique confluence of masterful writing and directing and exceptional acting performances, I think the film is underrated if anything: After all—it didn’t win any Oscars.

*Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To learn more, visit [DreamFlightEnt.com](http://DreamFlightEnt.com)*

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