FOREWORD REVIEWS THE INDIE WE LOVE.

Biography

Tough as Nails: The Life and Films of Richard Brooks
Douglass K. Daniel
The University of Wisconsin Press
978-0-299-25124-6
(February 28, 2011)

Anyone interested in the history of film making and what it takes to write and direct movies that matter should look no further than this book. Escaping the Philadelphia slums in the 1930s to become a journalist in Atlantic City and New York City, Richard Brooks succeeded in this and much more. A writer from the onset, he transitioned from playwright to novelist to scriptwriter, penning such classics as *Key Largo, Blackboard Jungle*, and Elmer Gantry.

"The man who lived at the top of his voice," said Peter O'Toole—just one of the many characterizations of the mercurial and bombastic rebel. Above all else, people who knew Brooks knew that he valued truth and honesty in his life and in his films. His gruff and demanding demeanor were off-putting to many but his work ethic and vision allowed him to write groundbreaking scripts, guide gutsy performances from talented actors, and direct some of the most definitive films of the past century. Brooks was obsessed with writing and getting to the story that conveyed human frailty and emotion, and he achieved this with many of his films, most notably Cat on a Hot Tin Roof and In Cold Blood.

Daniel has written a biography of an enigmatic figure that reads like a historical primer on how to become a director. Arranged chronologically, he discusses Brooks's life from the 1920s to the 1980s and how he survived war, bad films, the end of the Hollywood studio system, and the radically changing times of the sixties and early seventies. He reveals the inside workings of studios with stars such as Humphrey Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Paul Newman, Sidney Poitier, Elizabeth Taylor, John Huston, and Sam Fuller, by all of whom Brooks was eventually respected. Prone to shouting and verbally abusing crews and lesser cast members, Brooks was the epitome of the man whose soft heart was covered by a hard outer shell.

Fans of popular film culture of the twentieth century will appreciate Daniel's well-researched and stylishly written biography of a man whose journey through creativity was more important than anything else in his life, including his marriages. He strove for success and

accepted nothing less from others, seeking to change culture through films that were authentic and candid. After reading Tough as Nails, it's impossible to believe they could have been otherwise.

Monica Carter