KINONIK

RIFIFI (1955)

Directed by Jules Dassin

WEDNESDAY July 30th 7PM



We continue our summer trend of spotlighting blacklisted Hollywood creators with **Rififi** (1955), the genre-defining heist film directed by Jules Dassin five long years after his flight to Europe. The House Un-American Activities Committee had followed him across the Atlantic, pressuring U.S. embassies to threaten European actors who considered working with him. Shot on a shoestring budget with a cast of out-of-work actors and based on a novel he despised, Rififi became a critical and commercial success and made history as the first film by a blacklisted director to secure a credited U.S. release.

The title comes from French argot, loosely meaning “tough guys” or “trouble.” The film follows Tony (Jean Servais), a recently released jewel thief who agrees to one last job—but only if they up the stakes. Bracketed by violence and betrayal, the film’s centerpiece is a 32-minute heist sequence, executed without dialogue or score. The result is gripping, methodical, and mesmerizing. Not only would it be mimicked and referenced again and again in film as **Rififi**’s impact reverberated through the genre, but many more enthusiastic movie-goers even attempted to replicate it in real life. Fans of **Wages of Fear**, take note.

A film about men trying to reclaim their place in the world, made by artists doing the same, **Rififi** hums with urgency. The gamble paid off. Dassin won Best Director at Cannes, broke through the blacklist, and the cast found renewed careers. Rififi is no redemptive tale, but it is an entirely enthralling one. A can’t miss for fans of noir, heist, or French cinema.