

Made in U.S.A.

A Made in U.S.A. Concordance

Following is an attempt to identify the myriad literary, cinematic, and political references in Godard's *Made in U.S.A.*

Adieu la vie, Adieu l'amour

Karina is seen reading *Kiss Tomorrow Goodbye* by Horace McCoy (1897–1955), published in Gallimard's famous *Série Noire* crime collection as *Adieu la vie, Adieu l'amour* in 1948. The book (filmed in 1950 with James Cagney in the starring role) follows its thoroughly ruthless criminal protagonist

from chain gang escape to his return to a life of crime. McCoy is perhaps best known for his existential Depression novel *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* (1935).

As Tears Go By

Pop star Marianne Faithfull sings an a cappella version of “As Tears Go By,” the first song written by Mick Jagger and Keith Richards of The Rolling Stones and the song that launched Faithfull's career in 1964 at age 17. Her original record remained on the Billboard charts for 9 weeks; the song was subsequently recorded by the Stones as the B side to “19th Nervous Breakdown” in the U.K.

“Atlantic City”

The location is Gallicized as Atlantic-Cité, “cité” in its contemporary sense usually referring to a housing project.

Au Fond de L'homme, Cela

Dr. Korvo is seen reading *Au Fond de L'Homme, Cela (Le Livre du ça)*, the Gallimard edition of a German language book by Swiss physician Georg Groddeck (1866–1934), a pioneer of psychosomatic medicine. Freud borrowed the term “Id” from Groddeck; the English title of the work was *The Book of the It*.

The “Ben Barka Affair”

On October 30, 1965, *Le Monde* ran an article about the mysterious arrest of Mehdi Ben Barka, exiled leader of the left-wing Moroccan opposition. It was an arrest the police denied making. Ben Barka's disappearance was at the center of the news for months, during which the French secret police was revealed to have conspired with the criminal underworld to deliver Ben Barka to Moroccan agents. Morocco's interior minister was reported to have visited the hideout where Ben Barka was being held and to have tortured him to death. (Excerpted from *Everything is Cinema* by Richard Brody.)

Ben Hecht Street

Reference to newspaperman, playwright and screenwriter Ben Hecht (1894–1964).

Goodis, David

American noir fiction writer (1917–1967), particularly popular among French directors, notably Truffaut, who adapted his novel *Down There* as *Tirez sur le pianiste (Shoot the Piano Player)*, 1961).

“He remembers a lock of brown hair. . . .”

Quote from Apollinaire's poem *La Boucle retrouvée*.

“Hey, Philippe!”

The journalist is Philippe Labro (born 1936), playing himself, a reporter for the Europe 1 radio station. Author and journalist, he had been a soldier in the Algerian war. He later became a film and TV director.

“His parents fought mine at Dakar and Mers el-Kebir”

On July 3, 1940, shortly after defeated France signed an armistice with Germany and the collaborationist French government moved to Vichy, the British attacked and destroyed the French fleet holed up at Mers el-Kebir, Algeria, to stop it from falling into German hands. It was the beginning of fratricidal warfare between former allies. In September, General de Gaulle's newly-formed Free French Movement in London got off to a poor start with a failed naval expedition to capture the strategic port of Dakar in French West Africa (modern-day Senegal), then under the control of Vichy France.

“I have blood on my hands...Agadir, the Charonne Métro station, Mehdi Ben Barka.”

Agadir, a southwestern coastal city in Morocco, was the site of a 1960 earthquake that destroyed most of the city in 15 seconds. The Charonne Métro station in Paris, on the other hand, was the scene of politically motivated violence in 1962, when police repressed a left-wing demonstration in favor of Algeria's independence. Demonstrators tried to take refuge in the mouth of the Métro station, but it had been closed. Eight people were crushed to death.

“I just did a report on Chateauroux”

Labro has obviously been reporting on the evacuation of one of the 11 major U.S. bases in France after de Gaulle's decision to withdraw France from NATO in 1966.

Inspector Aldrich

Homage to director Robert Aldrich (1918–1983), a *Cahiers* darling, whose best-known films include the key noirs *Kiss Me Deadly* and *The Big Knife* (both 1955).

“In this mirror, I am enclosed alive”

A quotation from “Coeur Couronne et Miroir,” a late poem by Italian-born Guillaume Apollinaire (1880–1918), a precursor of the surrealist poets who, in fact, coined the word “surrealist.”

“I tawt I taw a putty tat!”

Catchphrase of the Warner Bros. cartoon character, a canary bird known as “Titi” in France.

“It was a certain Mark Dixon, a private detective, who killed Typhus.”

“Mark Dixon” is the character name (played by Dana Andrews) of a brutal police detective who accidentally kills a murder suspect in Preminger's *Where the Sidewalk Ends* (1950). The French title was *Mark Dixon, Détective*.

Korvo, Dr. Samuel

Reference to Dr. David Korvo, a villainous hypnotist played by José Ferrer in Otto Preminger's 1949 thriller *Whirlpool*.

Le Roman inachevé (The Unfinished Novel)

1956 collection of autobiographical verse by the Communist novelist and poet Louis Aragon (1897–1982).

Left, Year Zero

Godard photographs the cover of the paperback edition of a 1964 political study of the French left by Marc Paillet. The title is also a reference to Rossellini's *Germania, anno zero (Germany, Year Zero)*, 1948).

Ludwig, Dr. Edward

Russian-born Hollywood movie and TV director (1899–1982). Ludwig's *The Gun Hawk*, a B Western starring Rory Calhoun and Rod Cameron, was #6 in Godard's 10 Best Films of 1965, published in *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

“Mine worked in London for Colonel Passy”

André Dewavrin, codename Colonel Passy, was a French officer who served with Free French Forces intelligence services during World War II. Passy played himself in Melville's *Army of Shadows* (1969).

“Miss Daisy Kenyon”

Heroine played by Joan Crawford in Preminger's 1947 *Daisy Kenyon*, a romantic melodrama co-starring Henry Fonda and Dana Andrews.

“Miss Ruby Gentry”

Southern heroine played by Jennifer Jones in King Vidor's 1953 *Ruby Gentry*, co-starring Charlton Heston and Karl Malden.

Mizoguchi, Doris

Obvious reference to the great Japanese director Kenji Mizoguchi (1898–1956). Mizoguchi was popular among the *Cahiers* crowd long before his discovery by American cinephiles. Godard traveled to Kyoto, Japan, in April 1966 to visit his grave. Doris is played by Kyôko Kosaka, who appeared in one other French film and then became a popular folk singer in her native Japan in the 1970s.

Moroccan War

“One country that has escaped the current scrutiny of U.S. backing for Arab dictatorships is Morocco. . . . For most of the late King Hassan II's thirty-eight-year rule, the United States and France provided financial and diplomatic support to this moderate on Arab-Israeli issues, while his henchmen tortured and secretly jailed thousands of domestic critics. Hundreds were disappeared. . . .” (Excerpted from *The Nation*, January 21, 2002.)

Nelson, Paula

Why is Karina's character called Paula Nelson? *New Yorker* writer Richard Brody (author of definitive Godard study *Everything is Cinema*) may have solved the mystery: “Godard's father's name was Paul; think of how many Pauls appear in Godard's movies: *Vivre sa Vie*, *Contempt*, *Masculine Feminine*, *Every Man for Himself* [even the star of his first feature, *Breathless*, was Jean-Paul, and, in *Made in USA*, the Widmark character's first name is Paul, not Richard]. I'm guessing that the Nelson is for Baby Face Nelson, the 1930s American outlaw played by Mickey Rooney in a 1957 B movie directed by. . . Donald Siegel.” (See below: Siegel, Donald.)

“Oh, Paula, you robbed me of my youth!”

Said when Paula plugs David Goodis: a paraphrase of Hotspur's line “O, Harry, thou hast robbed me of my youth!” in Shakespeare's *Henry IV* Part I (V.iv.76–78).

Ouest-France

Ouest-France (“West-France”) is a leading provincial daily French newspaper. Founded in 1944, it today has a circulation of 762,400, mostly in Brittany.

Politzer, Georges

Marxist, born in 1903 in present-day Romania, known as “the red-headed philosopher” and active in the French Resistance. He was executed by the Gestapo in 1942. Godard, who supplies his voice in the film, used the name as a stand-in for Georges Figon, thought to be involved in the death of Ben Barka.

Preminger Street

The most direct reference (of at least four) to director Otto Preminger (1906–1986), master of the Scope film.

“Remember Elisabeth in Les Enfants terribles?”

A reference to Jean-Pierre Melville's 1950 film of Jean Cocteau's 1929 novel about an incestuous pair of siblings. Cocteau's voice-over declares that there is “no changing” the pair's perverse ways. (Director Melville made a memorable cameo in Godard's first film, *Breathless*.)

Siegel, Donald

Jean-Pierre Léaud's character is a reference to director Don Siegel (1912–1991), celebrated for a string of seminal genre movies including *Riot in Cell Block II* (1954), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *Baby Face Nelson* (1957; see note above re Paula Nelson), and *The Lineup* (1958). Siegel was the mentor of actor/director Clint Eastwood and directed the actor's first Dirty Harry film. The character may also be a reference to mystery writer Donald Westlake, whose book *The Jugger* was the film's source novel.

“They worked for the French Gestapo”

The French dialogue specifically refers to Bonny and Lafont, who headed the French Gestapo between about 1941 and 1944. Many French post-war noir novels and films (notably those by José Giovanni) feature protagonists involved with the French Gestapo, such as the fugitives of Sautet's *Classe tous risques* and Melville's *Le Deuxième Souffle*.

“To Nick and Samuel, who raised me to respect image and sound” (film dedication)

Godard dedicates his film to mentor directors Nicholas Ray and Sam Fuller.

Typhus

In Westlake's source novel *The Jugger*, the name of the height-challenged victim is Tiftus. Pronounced in French, the name comes out sounding like the disease.

“What kind of progress can there be with Lecanuet, Pinay, Pleven?”

Three prominent center right and conservative politicians of the Fourth Republic. Jean Lecanuet ran in the 1965 presidential election as a center-right candidate in 1965. He advocated modernity and European integration.

Widmark, Paul

Reference to Hollywood star Richard Widmark (1914-2008), memorable as the psycho bad guy of several film noirs of the late 40s and early 50s, most notably *Kiss of Death*. Widmark's one film for director Otto Preminger, 1957's *Saint Joan*, would prove to have significance in Godard's career: it introduced his *Breathless* star Jean Seberg.

“You still work at Radar?”

The comment finally reveals that Karina works for a sensation-seeking true crime magazine, hardly the periodical for a journalist with “principles.”

“You'll miss me, honey, some of these days. . . .”

Lyric from “Some Of These Days,” a perpetual standard written in 1910 by Shelton Brooks and best known as the theme song of “last of the Red Hot mamas” Sophie Tucker. The song figures prominently in Sartre's existential novel *Nausea* (1938).