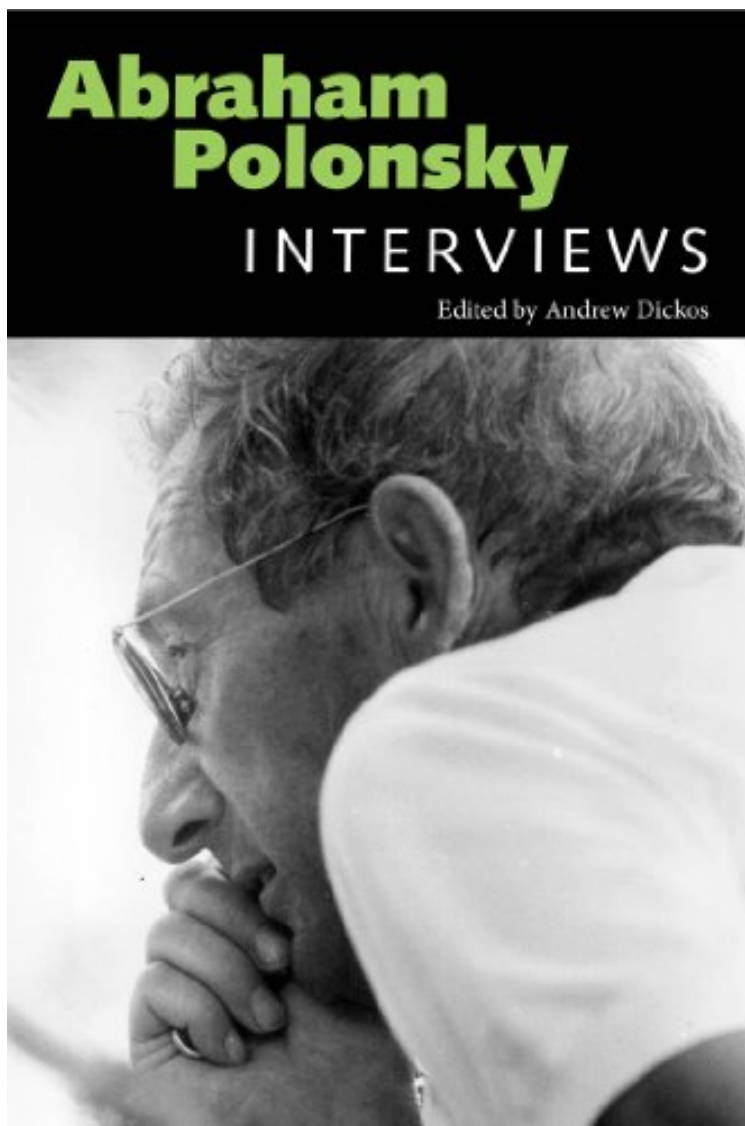


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Abraham Polonsky (Conversations with Filmmakers Series)

Andrew Dickos

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Andrew Dickos : Abraham Polonsky (Conversations with Filmmakers Series) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Abraham Polonsky (Conversations with Filmmakers Series):

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. brilliant and insightful thoughts from a great man and great filmmaker By Joseph McBride I just received a copy of this superb anthology, which is just out. I read most of it already yesterday and find it a very important book on one of our greatest filmmakers and a great man. I say this even though I am biased because I am represented in the book with a resurrected, previously unpublished 1980 qa I did with

Abe Polonsky at Filmex in 1980 about his masterpiece *TELL THEM WILLIE BOY IS HERE* and added some material on it from my thoughts and my earlier discussion with him after we watched the film together in 1975, the first time he'd seen it since its release in 1969. This is by far the best book available on Polonsky (not including the fine collections of his scripts). He was a brilliant man and highly original writer and director and gave searching, introspective, in-depth, educational interviews (he had been and continued to be a teacher) that didn't much repeat each other, unlike most other directors' interviews. Reading this collection of his thoughts over the years, you will be deeply impressed with Abe's intellectual range, depth, courage, and challenging nature. He reflects profoundly on film and history and the blacklist and Cold War era. It's a book with many insights and lessons for our current dilemmas. Andrew Dickos did a fine job tracking down and editing the material. Highly recommended to all interested in American film, culture, and history.

Abraham Polonsky (1910-1999), screenwriter and filmmaker of the mid-twentieth-century Left, recognized his writerly mission to reveal the aspirations of his characters in a material society structured to undermine their hopes. In the process, he ennobled their struggle. His auspicious beginning in Hollywood reached a zenith with his Oscar-nominated screenplay for Robert Rossen's boxing noir, *Body and Soul* (1947), and his inaugural film as writer and director, *Force of Evil* (1948), before he was blacklisted during the McCarthy witch hunt. Polonsky envisioned cinema as a modern artist. His aesthetic appreciation for each technical component of the screen aroused him to create voiceovers of urban cadences--poetic monologues spoken by the city's everyman, embodied by the actor who played his heroes best, John Garfield. His use of David Raksin's score in *Force of Evil*, against the backdrop of the grandeur of New York City's landscape and the conflict between the brothers Joe and Leo Morse, elevated film noir into classical family tragedy. Like Garfield, Polonsky faced persecution and an aborted career during the blacklist. But unlike Garfield, Polonsky survived to resume his career in Hollywood during the ferment of the late sixties. Then his vision of a changing society found allegorical expression in *Tell Them Willie Boy Is Here*, his impressive anti-Western showing the destruction of the Paiute rebel outsider, Willie Boy, and cementing Polonsky as a moral voice in cinema.