



# A Third Face: My Tale of Writing, Fighting, and Filmmaking

*Samuel Fuller*

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In his new book, Samuel Fuller, independent director-producer extraordinaire, tells the story of his life, a life that spanned most of the twentieth century. His twenty-nine tough, gritty pictures made from 1949 to 1989 set out to capture the truth of war, racism, and human frailties, and incorporate some of his own experiences.

He writes of his years in the newspaper business—selling papers as a boy on the streets of New York, working for Hearst's *New York Journal American*, first as a copyboy, then as personal runner for the famous Hearst editor in chief Arthur Brisbane. His film *Park Row* was inspired by his years as a reporter for the *New York Evening Graphic*, where his beat included murders, suicides, state executions, and race riots—he scooped every other New York paper with his coverage of the death by drug overdose of the legendary Jeanne Eagels.

Fuller writes about hitchhiking across the country, seeing America firsthand at the height of the Great Depression. He writes of his years in the army . . . fighting with the first infantry division in World War II, called the Big Red One . . . on the front lines during the invasion of North Africa and Sicily, and landing on Omaha Beach on D Day, June 6, 1944. These experiences he later captured in his hugely successful pictures *The Big Red One*, *The Steel Helmet*, and *Merrill's Marauders*, which was based on the true story of a three-thousand-man infantry that fought behind enemy lines in Burma in 1944.

Fuller talks about directing his first picture (he also wrote the script), *I Shot Jesse James* . . . and how, as a result, he was sought after by every major studio, choosing to work for Darryl Zanuck of Twentieth Century Fox. We see him becoming one of the most prolific, independent-minded writer-directors, turning out seven pictures in six years, among them *Pickup on South Street*, *House of Bamboo*, and *China Gate*. He writes about making *Underworld U.S.A.*, a movie that shows how gangsters in the 1960s were no longer seen as thugs but as “respected” tax-paying executives . . . about the making of the movie *Shock Corridor*—about a journalist trying to solve a murder in a lunatic asylum—which exposed the conditions in mental institutions . . . and about *White Dog* (written in collaboration with Curtis Hanson), a film so controversial that Paramount's then studio heads, Jeffrey Katzenberg and Michael Eisner, refused to release it.

Honest, open, engrossing. A must for anyone interested in movies.

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