



## Biography for Richard Brooks

After attending Philadelphia's Temple University, Richard Brooks labored away as a sports reporter for the Atlantic City Press Union, the Philadelphia Record and the New York World-Telegram. Brooks joined New York radio station WNEW as a staff writer in the late 1930s, then moved on to the NBC network writing pool. After a season as director of New York's Mill Pond Theatre, Brooks headed to Los Angeles, where he did some more radio writing and broke into films as a scripter of "B" pictures, Maria Montez epics and serials. Following two years' wartime service with the Marines, Brooks published his first novel, an anti-intolerance effort titled *The Brick Foxhole*. Brooks was contractually unable to work on the screenplay adaptation of *Brick Foxhole* (released in 1947 as *Crossfire*), but found time to pen a brace of additional novels; he also co-wrote *Brute Force* (1947) and *Key Largo* (1948). In 1950, Brooks made his directorial debut with MGM's *Crisis*, an offbeat political melodrama containing a memorable dramatic performance by Cary Grant. Brooks' breakthrough film as director was the landmark juvenile delinquent drama *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955). Thereafter, Brooks was regarded as an "independent" (though he didn't officially break away from the studio system until 1965), scripting as well as directing such prestige items as *Brothers Karamazov* (1958) and *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*. He earned several Academy Award nominations, winning the "Best Screenplay" Oscar for *Elmer Gantry* (1960). Brooks' later independent productions, nearly all of them adapted from popular novels, included *Lord Jim* (1965) *In Cold Blood* (1967) *Happy Ending* (1969, starring Brooks' then-wife Jean Simmons) and *Looking for Mr. Goodbar* (1976). In 1987, Brooks entered into a partnership with actor Robert Culp, but their Crime Inc. Productions never produced a film. ~ Hal Erickson, All Movie Guide

**Date of birth** 18 May 1912, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA,

**Birth name** Ruben Sax

**Date of death** 11 March 1992, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, California, USA. (congestive heart failure)

## Mini biography

Richard Brooks was born Ruben Sax on May 18, 1912, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, USA. His parents were Russian Jewish immigrants. He graduated from West Philadelphia HS, then from Philadelphia's Temple University, and worked as a sports reporter and radio journalist in the 1930's. After a stint as a writer for the NBC network he worked for one season as director of New York's Mill Pond Theatre, and then headed to Los Angeles. There he broke into films as a scripter of "B" movies, Maria Montez epics, serials, and also did some radio writing. During the Second World War, Richard Brooks served with the Marines for two years. Brooks made his directorial debut with MGM's *Crisis* (1950) starring Gary Grant. He scripted and directed brothers *Karamazov* (1958), *Cat on the Hot Tin Roof* (1958), before winning the "Best Screenplay" Oscar for *Elmer Gantry* (1960). He had six Oscar nominations and 25 other nominations for his film-works. Richard Brooks was a writer and director of Chekhovian depth, who mastered the use of understatement, anticlimax, and implied emotion. His films enjoyed lasting appeal and tended to be more serious than the mainstream productions. Brooks was regarded as "independent" even before he officially broke away from the studio system in 1965. In the 1980s he had his own production company. Richard Brooks died of a heart failure on March 11, 1992, in Beverly Hills, California, and was laid to rest in the Hillside Memorial Park Cemetery in Culver City, California. Richard Brooks has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame at 6422 Hollywood Boulevard, for his contribution to the art of motion picture.

**Spouse** Jean Simmons 1960-1977, divorced, one child

## Trivia

- Graduate of West Philadelphia HS and Temple University.
- Biography in: John Wakeman, editor. "World Film Directors, Volume Two, 1945-1985". Pages 167-172. New York: The H.W. Wilson Company, 1988.
- Directed 10 different actors in Oscar-nominated performances: Lee J. Cobb, Paul Newman, Elizabeth Taylor, Burt Lancaster, Shirley Jones, Ed Begley, Geraldine Page, Shirley Knight, Jean Simmons and Tuesday Weld. Lancaster, Jones and Begley won Oscars for their performances in one of Brooks's movies.

**Personal quotes** "First comes the word, then comes all the rest."

## Writer - filmography

1. Fever Pitch (1985)
2. Wrong Is Right (1982)
3. Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1977)
4. Bite the Bullet (1975)
5. § (1971) (written by)
6. The Happy Ending (1969)
7. In Cold Blood (1967) (screenplay)
8. The Professionals (1966) (written by)
9. Lord Jim (1965) (written by)
10. Sweet Bird of Youth (1962)
11. Elmer Gantry (1960) (screenplay)
12. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958) (screenplay)
13. The Brothers Karamazov (1958)
14. Something of Value (1957)
15. The Last Hunt (1956)

16. Blackboard Jungle (1955)
17. The Last Time I Saw Paris (1954) (screenplay)
18. Battle Circus (1953)
19. Deadline - U.S.A. (1952)
20. The Light Touch (1952)
21. Storm Warning (1951)
22. Mystery Street (1950)
23. Crisis (1950)
24. Any Number Can Play (1949)
25. Key Largo (1948)
26. To the Victor (1948)
27. Crossfire (1947) (novel The Brick Foxhole)
28. Brute Force (1947)
29. Swell Guy (1946)
30. The Killers (1946) (uncredited)
31. Cobra Woman (1944)
32. My Best Gal (1944) (story)
33. White Savage (1943)
34. Don Winslow of the Coast Guard (1943) (additional dialogue)
35. Sin Town (1942) (additional dialogue)
36. Men of Texas (1942) (screenplay)

**Director - filmography**

1. Fever Pitch (1985)
2. Wrong Is Right (1982)
3. Looking for Mr. Goodbar (1977)
4. Bite the Bullet (1975)
5. § (1971)
6. The Happy Ending (1969)
7. In Cold Blood (1967)
8. The Professionals (1966)
9. Lord Jim (1965)
10. Sweet Bird of Youth (1962)
11. Elmer Gantry (1960)
12. Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958)
13. The Brothers Karamazov (1958)
14. Something of Value (1957)
15. The Catered Affair (1956)
16. The Last Hunt (1956)
17. Blackboard Jungle (1955)
18. The Last Time I Saw Paris (1954)
19. The Flame and the Flesh (1954)
20. Take the High Ground! (1953)
21. Battle Circus (1953)
22. Deadline - U.S.A. (1952)
23. The Light Touch (1952)
24. Crisis (1950)

**Producer - filmography**

1. Wrong Is Right (1982) (producer)
2. Bite the Bullet (1975) (producer)
3. The Happy Ending (1969) (producer)
4. In Cold Blood (1967) (producer)
5. The Professionals (1966) (producer) (uncredited)
6. Lord Jim (1965) (producer) (uncredited)

**Himself - filmography**

1. Hollywood Rocks the Movies: The Early Years (1955-1970) (2000) (TV)
2. "MGM: When the Lion Roars" (1992) (mini) TV Series Himself
3. Listen Up: The Lives of Quincy Jones (1990) Himself
4. Cary Grant: A Celebration of a Leading Man (1988) (TV) Himself
5. Bacall on Bogart (1988) (TV) Himself
6. Elizabeth Taylor: Hollywood's Child (1975) (TV) Himself
7. "The DuPont Show of the Week"  
- The Beauty of a Woman (1962) TV Episode Himself
8. The 33rd Annual Academy Awards (1961) (TV) Himself - Best Screenplay Winner

