

0. HOWARD MAKES MOVIES - Story Preface

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This photo—depicting Howard Hughes, Jr. in his youth—is [online](#) via the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA). Hughes's parents called their son—who was named after his father—"Sonny."

[Howard Hughes](#) had an outstanding example to follow when it came to making movies. His Uncle Rupert, who lived until he was 84, was once the [highest-paid](#) writer in Hollywood. In his book *Behind the Screen*, Sam Goldwyn said of Rupert (at page 245):

(He) has a capacity for work which I have never seen excelled. Many times I have known him to arrive in the studio early in the morning, direct all day, go home that evening to work on a scenario, and then, after perhaps a dinner or a dance, write several chapters of his new novel.

Like his brother Howard, Rupert died at his desk of a heart attack. His illustrious career had spanned sixty years. His nephew's movie-making endeavors, although impressive, did not last nearly so long.

Many of Howard's early movies were silent films. The originals were kept, for decades, in the Hughes archive at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. They were digitally restored in a recent project funded by Turner Classic Movies.

Among Howard's most important film achievements were:

- *Two Arabian Knights*, starring [William \("Hopalong Cassidy"\) Boyd](#) and [Louis Wolheim](#). His third film (the first two were unsuccessful), *Arabian Knights* won an Academy Award and established Howard Hughes as a successful, 21-year-old Hollywood director.
- *The Racket*, based on a stage play by a Chicago reporter, had a sophisticated storyline: A corrupt city government and a complacent press (like those in Chicago) created a safe haven for gangsters (like [Al Capone](#)). The movie was a hit throughout the country, except in Chicago where it was banned. (Nervous theater owners in Capone's town were concerned about how 'the Boss' might react.)
- *Hell's Angels*, begun as a silent film which Hughes remade when 'talkies' came into vogue, contains memorably haunting scenes. To avoid becoming 'excess weight,' for example, German crewmen (who are carrying out a [Zeppelin](#) air raid over London during World War I) jump to their deaths. Not all the film's content was so emotionally intense: This was [the film](#) which made [Jean Harlow](#) (who died at the young age of 26) a star.
- *Scarface: The Shame of the Nation* was released in 1932, although many people at the time were not able to see it. Extremely violent, the film recreates many [Prohibition-era gangsters](#) and their exploits.
- *The Outlaw*, introducing 19-year-old Jane Russell, was another huge box-office hit. The finished product required Hughes - once again - to battle Hollywood censors.

Despite his love of making films, Howard Hughes had another overriding passion. Ever since the day he flew in a Curtiss seaplane, Howard Hughes was in love with flying.

He became a pilot himself during the production of *Hell's Angels*. And it was *that* passion, to fly faster and faster, which ultimately contributed to his downfall.

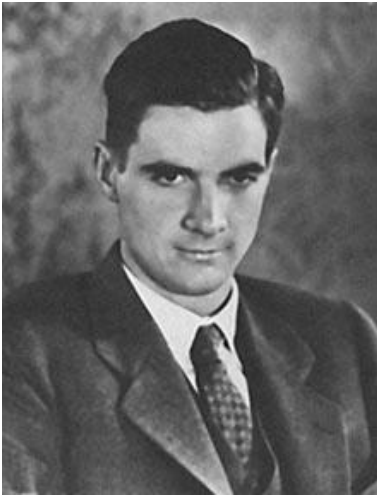
See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/HOWARD-MAKES-MOVIES-Aviator>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

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Media Stream



Mr. Hughes Hits Hollywood

Image online, courtesy Fondren Library at Rice University.

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Louis Wolheim - One of Howard's Star Actors

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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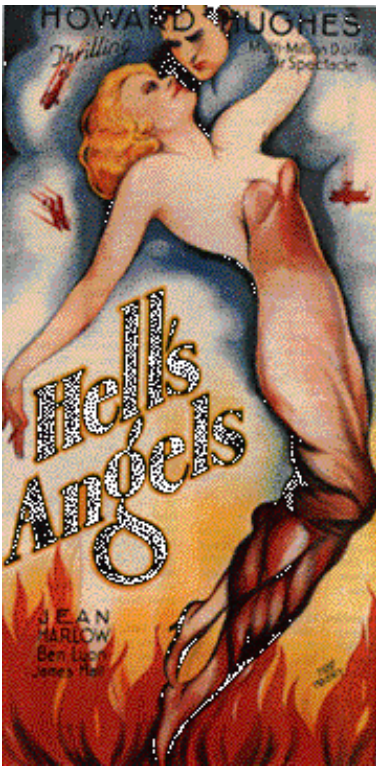
Hells Angels - Howard Hughes' "Talkie" Film

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Jean Harlow's Provocative Performance

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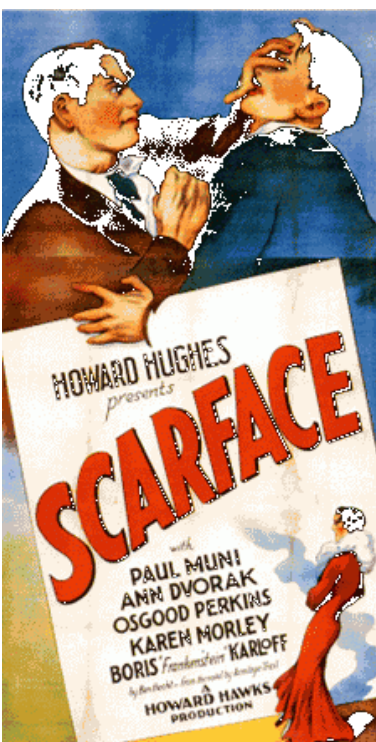
Jean Harlow - Howard Hughes' Starlette

Image online, courtesy Wikimedia Commons.

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Scarface - Movie Poster

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Howard Hughes - Hollywood Film, "The Outlaw"

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