

A review of 'act of violence'

Sociology, Violence



Frank Enley (Heflin) who is a soldier of World War II, comes back home from the warfare after surviving a German POW campsite whilst the rest of his companions have been assassinated. What he is not aware of is that Joe Parkson (Ryan), one of his jail friends has survived. Parkson recognizes that Enley assisted the Nazis in exchange for foodstuff whilst at prison, and Parkson is a manhunt to demolish the so-called "war hero" (Briggs J, 2003, 177)

Enley, who is at the moment married to Edith (Leigh), ought to confront his dark history as well as the fact that he is a coward not a hero of war. In the meantime, Parkson gets closer and close to attaining his revenge. Enley then sets out hiding by leaving behind his bewildered wife and surviving on the lam. Enley enlists the help of a prostitute, Pat (Mary Astor) as well as a Hitman (Berry Kroeger) (Briggs J, 2003)

A comparison of Robert Ryan's acting/story line

'Act of Violence' must have been fascinating in 1948 when its idea was fresh. Enley is tracked by Parkson to a mountain lake and then Parkson pursues him home, pulling his lame leg around the home like Lon Chaney's Mummy ogre and driving Edith Enley partially wild with fear. Edith recognizes that something essential is awry when Frank declines to call the police or take any apparent safety measures against Parkson; his plan is to merely avoid him, as if going missing might resolve the problem. (Briggs J, 2003)

Parkson has no difficulty tracing his mine to a contractor's convention in the city center of Los Angeles. Drunk, terrified and not to able to face his own guiltiness, Enley is selected up by a trio of skid line lowlifes. B-Girl Pat (Mary

Astor, seven significant years following *The Maltese Falcon*) sets up Enley for a dishonest lawyer (Taylor Holmes) and a slimy hit man (Berry Kroeger) who searches for profit by getting rid of Parkson for cash. (Briggs J, 2003)

The film's dramatics are peculiarly unresolved. Both principal male characters are crippled. Parkson is a physical/emotional mess of vengeance motivations, and Enley is a moral weakling. Detached from the root source, the women ought to look beyond their own understanding to realize what to do.

Parkson's loyal darling Ann Sturges (Phyllis Thaxter) battles his revengeful expedition every step of the way, whereas Enley's unfortunate wife Edith has a more difficult predicament. She's disgusted when her handsome husband discloses himself to be gutless and guilty, but never goes beyond passively yielding to his desires, even when he repetitively deceives her, 'good reasons' or no.

Enley's whining explanation of the deadly wartime incident is so dreadful that Edith has no immediate reply. Her husband teamed up with his Nazi captors to live, a choice taken for individual survival and streamlined by the assertion that he was trying to defend his fellow prisoners. The consequence was that all of his bunkmates were unpleasantly murdered; Parkson survived merely by pure luck. (Briggs J, 2003)

Enley has managed a relaxed denial for three years, believing that all of the men affected by his fault were dead. But as quickly as Parkson materializes, he disintegrates into a whining child, alternately excusing and condemning

himself, and most unforgettably weeping out in a downtown L. A. subway for Parkson not to pass away.

Inquisitively, Enley's bad ruling in the P. O. W. campsite no longer appears so unforgivable, only in draconian rules of honor are starved men anticipated to die silently, remaining fully accountable for their actions as they give in.
(Briggs J, 2003)