

# Chinatown: An Elegy for the Lost Soul of Hollywood

By James Ellroy

In the annals of American cinema, few films have cast as long a shadow as Roman Polanski's 1974 masterpiece, Chinatown. A dark and brooding neo-noir, Chinatown tells the story of private detective J.J. Gittes (Jack Nicholson), who is hired to investigate a case of adultery only to find himself embroiled in a web of corruption and murder that reaches the highest levels of Los Angeles society.



## The Big Goodbye: Chinatown and the Last Years of Hollywood by Sam Wasson

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 9695 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
X-Ray : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 403 pages



Chinatown was a critical and commercial success, winning 11 Academy Awards and becoming one of the most iconic films of the 1970s. However, the film's legacy has been tarnished in recent years by allegations of sexual misconduct against Polanski. In light of these allegations, it is worth revisiting Chinatown as a work of art, separate from its creator.

At its core, Chinatown is a film about the corruption of power. The film's villain, Noah Cross (John Huston), is a ruthless land developer who is willing to kill anyone who stands in his way. Cross is a symbol of the corrupting influence of money and power, and his actions have a devastating impact on the lives of the people around him.

Chinatown is also a film about the loss of innocence. The film's protagonist, J.J. Gittes, is a cynical private detective who has seen the dark side of human nature. However, Gittes is still capable of being shocked by the depths of depravity that he encounters in Chinatown.

The film's ending is one of the most iconic in cinema history. Gittes finally confronts Cross, but Cross is too powerful to be defeated. Gittes is forced to walk away, knowing that Cross will continue to get away with his crimes. The film's ending is a powerful indictment of the corrupting influence of power, and it leaves the viewer with a sense of hopelessness and despair.

Chinatown is a masterpiece of American cinema. It is a dark and brooding film, but it is also a powerful and moving story about the corruption of power and the loss of innocence. The film is a must-see for anyone interested in film noir, American history, or the human condition.

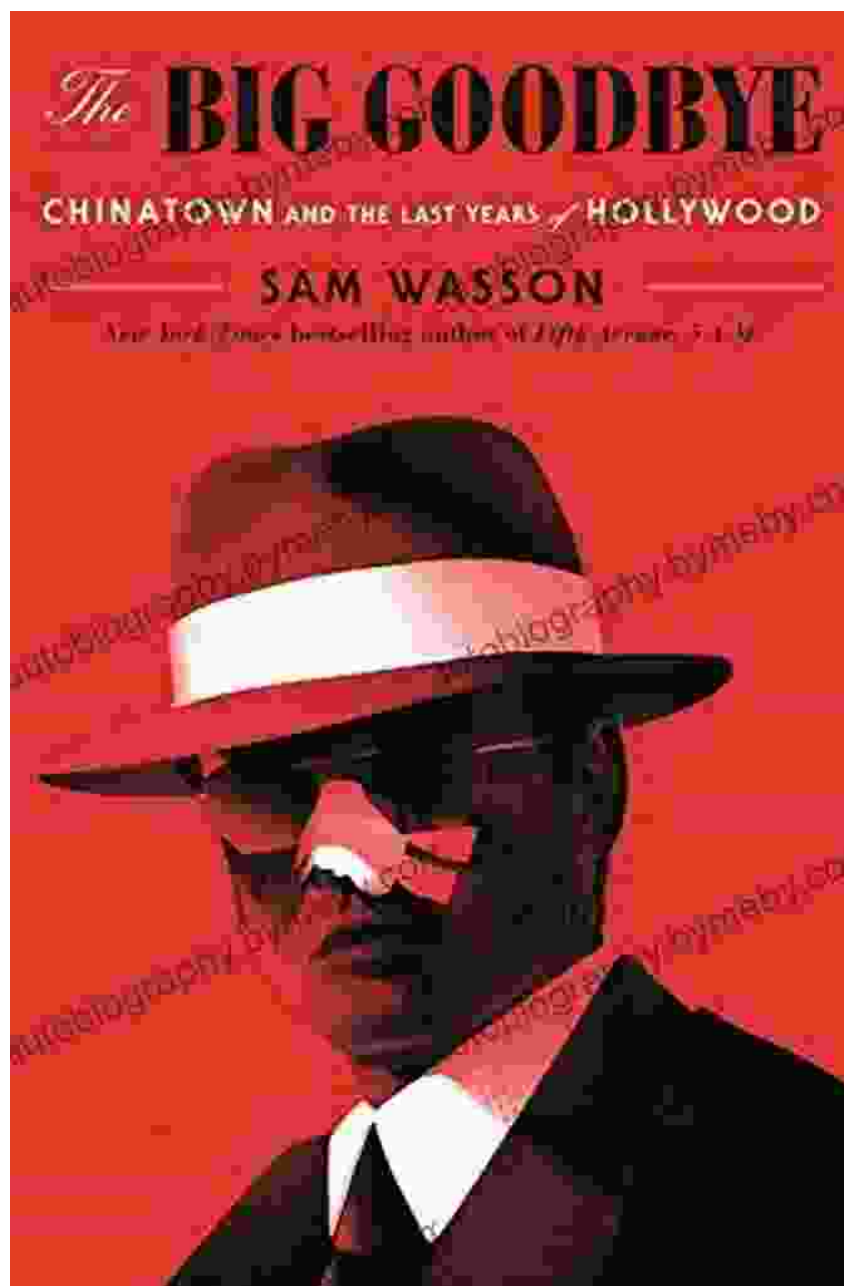
In his 1994 book, *Chinatown: And the Last Years of Hollywood*, James Ellroy provides a non-fiction account of the real-life scandal that inspired the film. Ellroy's book is a fascinating and meticulously researched account of the corruption and violence that plagued Los Angeles in the 1930s.

Ellroy's book is not for the faint of heart. It is a dark and disturbing story, but it is also an important one. Ellroy's book sheds light on a forgotten chapter

in American history, and it provides a valuable context for the film Chinatown.

Chinatown: And the Last Years of Hollywood is a must-read for anyone interested in the film Chinatown, American history, or true crime. It is a powerful and disturbing book, but it is also an important one.

## Image Gallery



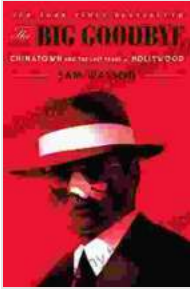




### Further Reading

- [Chinatown: And the Last Years of Hollywood](#) by James Ellroy
- [Chinatown \(Criterion Collection\)](#)
- [Chinatown \(IMDb\)](#)

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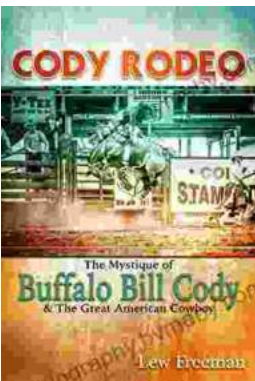
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