

Angels with Dirty Faces (1938)

Screenplay by John Wexley & Warren Duff
Directed by Michael Curtiz

Cast

James Cagney	Rocky Sullivan
Pat O'Brien	Jerry Connolly
Humphrey Bogart	James Frazier
Anne Sheridan	Laury Martin

Awards

Oscar Nominations

Best Actor (James Cagney)
Best Director
Best Writing/ Original Story (Rowland Brown)



Plot Synopsis

Two boyhood friends, Rocky Sullivan and Jerry Connolly have taken different paths in life. After Rocky is arrested he is sent to a juvenile facility and becomes a lifelong tough guy and criminal. Jerry on the other hand goes straight and becomes a Catholic priest ministering to people in the same neighborhood when he and Rocky grew up. When Rocky is released from prison he resumes his criminal lifestyle and becomes much admired by many of the local kids. Worried that the kids will follow Rocky into the criminal world, Jerry works hard to keep them on the straight and narrow. When Rocky is convicted and sentenced to the electric chair, Jerry asks him for one last favor.

Tidbits and Trivia

- Some segments of this movie were remade and modified for the feature film Home Alone (1990) and its sequel. In the two movies, Kevin watches them as "Angels with Filthy Souls" and "Angels with Even Filthier Souls".
- Because of the controversy over gangster films, the film was banned outright in Denmark, China, Poland, Finland, and parts of Canada and Switzerland.
- When James Cagney was the film, his agent was "convinced" that he would never agree to play the role of an "abject coward" being dragged to his execution. Cagney, however, was enthusiastic about the chance to play Rocky. He saw it as an opportunity to prove that he had a broad acting range that extended beyond "tough guy" roles.
- For years, viewers have wondered whether or not "Rocky" Sullivan (James Cagney) really turned yellow as he was being strapped into the electric chair. Some have wondered if he was faking it in order to keep his promise to Father Jerry. When asked about the scene years later, Cagney says he chose to play it in such a way so that the audience could make their own decisions as to whether or not he was faking.
- This was the first of three movies James Cagney made with Humphrey Bogart.