

Mike Howard grew up across the street from the local gambling and juke joints in Phenix City, Alabama. In 1954 Mike was 10 years old.

***The Phenix City Story* (1955)** is a [film noir](#) directed by [Phil Karlson](#) and written by [Daniel Mainwaring](#) and [Crane Wilbur](#).

The drama depicts the real-life 1954 assassination of Alabama attorney general [Albert Patterson](#) in [Phenix City, Alabama](#), a city controlled by organized crime, and the subsequent imposition of martial law. Some prints of the film include a 13-minute newsreel-style preface including interviews with the actual participants.

## Critical reception

When the film was released in 1955, [Bosley Crowther](#) gave the film a positive review, writing, "In a style of dramatic documentation that is as sharp and sure as was that of *[On the Waterfront](#)*—or, for a more appropriate comparison, that of the memorable *[All the King's Men](#)*—scriptwriters Crane Wilbur and Dan Mainwaring and director Phil Karlson expose the raw tissue of corruption and terrorism in an American city that is steeped in vice. They catch in slashing, searching glimpses the shrewd chicanery of evil men, the callousness and baseness of their puppets and the dread and silence of local citizens. And, through a series of excellent performances, topped by that of John McIntyre as the eventually martyred crusader, they show the sinew and the bone of those who strive for decent things."<sup>[2]</sup>

Film critic Bruce Eder wrote, "One of the most violent and realistic crime films of the 1950s, *The Phenix City Story* pulses with the bracing energy of actual life captured on the screen in its establishing shots and key scenes, and punctuates that background with explosively filmed action scenes. Director Phil Karlson showed just how good he was at merging well-told screen drama with vivid verisimilitude, and leaving no seams to show where they joined. Filmed on location in Alabama with a documentary-like look, the movie captured the ambiance and tenor of its [Deep South](#) setting better than almost any other fact-based movie of its era."<sup>[3]</sup>

<http://home.hiwaay.net/~magro/phenix.html>

<http://movies.nytimes.com/movie/106039/The-Phenix-City-Story/overview>