

All That Money Can Buy

(aka: "The Devil and Daniel Webster"; "Daniel and the Devil"; "Here is a Man")
 US : 1941 : dir. William Dieterle : RKO : 106 min
 prod: William Dieterle / Charles L Glett : scr: Dan Totheroh : dir.ph.: Joseph August
[Sonny Bupp](#)
 Walter Huston; James Craig; Anne Shirley; Simone Simon; Edward Arnold; Jane Darwell;
 Gene Lockhart; John Qualen; Frank Conlan; Lindy Wade; George Cleveland; H. B. Warner

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	≠	M	☺	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5871	3.5	8	1	1,957	3	-	3	-	-	No	uncertain



*Nothing quite whiles away a tedious carriage journey like popping the nearest child across your knees and warming the seat of his britches. Sonny Bupp gets a helping of same.
 Source: indeterminate website*

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"Stephen Vincent Benet's story is a visual delight with Huston's sparkling performance as Mr Scratch (the Devil) matched by Arnold as the loquacious Webster. Oscar-winning score by Bernard Hermann, cinematography by Joseph August, and special effects by Vernon L Walker all superb. Screenplay by the author and Dan Totheroh. Cut [to 85 min] for reissue in 1952; restored to 107 minutes on video and laserdisc, adding interesting material missing from other extant prints. ***1/2 "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"The filming of Stephen Vincent Benet's short story *"The Devil and Daniel Webster"* is a visual delight, with Huston's sparkling performance as Mr Scratch (the Devil) equalled by Arnold as the loquacious Webster. Although the current edition is shorter than the 112 minute original it is still required viewing. Also known as "**THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER**" and "**DANIEL AND THE DEVIL**". Bernard Hermann won an Oscar for Best Music. **1/2 "

Halliwell's Film Guide review:

"A hard-pressed farmer gives in to the Devil's tempting, but is saved from the pit by a famous lawyer's pleading at his "trial". A brilliant Germanic "*Faust*" set in 19th-century New Hampshire and using historical figures, alienation effects, comedy aides and the whole cinematic box of tricks which Hollywood had just learned again through "**CITIZEN KANE**". A magic act in more ways than one. From the story *The Devil and Daniel Webster* by Stephen Vincent Benet.

Mr Scratch (a great performance by Walter Huston): "A soul. A soul is nothing. Can you see it, smell it, touch it? No. Think of it – this soul – your soul – a nothing, against seven whole years of bad luck! You will have money and all that money can buy." Academy Award: Bernard Hermann, Best Original Score; nomination: Walter Huston, Best Supporting Actor. **** ”

"Some of those in the movie industry who saw it restively called it a dog; but some of them cried it was another catapult hurling the cinema up to its glorious destiny."

– Cecilia Ager

The Critics' Film Guide review:

"A poor farmer (James Craig) is tempted by the Devil (Walter Huston) but rescued by lawyer Daniel Webster (Edward Arnold). Maybe it could have been done with a lighter touch, but tremendous performances, entertaining special effects and a great score (Bernard Hermann's only Oscar-winner) combine with an ingenious script and stylish, expressionistic direction to make this a minor classic – although it was a commercial flop on release. **8/10** ”

Anti:

"Oratory profoundly American and personalia foreign to British observer."

– **Today's Cinema**

"Humourless and arty in the Germanic tradition." – **Shipman**

Mixed:

"Some of those in the movie industry who saw it restively called it a dog, but some of them

cried it was another catapult hurling the cinema up to its glorious destiny. Well, it's interesting and charming and beguiling. It has integrity and only honest intentions, even in the moments when it fails." – Cecilia Ager

"Dan Totherot joined Benet in writing the screenplay. It is good writing, almost poetic in numerous passages. Particularly well handled are the time lapses under Dieterle's skilled direction. He does not hesitate to employ the artistic, even at the sacrifice of pace... Perhaps there would be some benefit in eliminating nearly a reel from the finished picture, but this reviewer is glad he saw it exactly as it is." – **Hollywood Reporter**

Pro:

"Faces the hazard of being proclaimed an artistic triumph while faring in the field of commerce according to the state of the public's appetite for fantasy, allegory and symbolism at the moment and point of exhibition... The production abounds in entertainment value... it ranks with the finest productions Hollywood has made in point of artistic quality."

– **Moving Picture Herald**

"A now classic movie, handsomely photographed and beautifully scored and one that stands the test of time almost as well as the masterly "**CITIZEN KANE**" made in the same year." – Roy Pickard, **Dictionary of 1000 Best Films**, 1971

The Good Film and Video Guide review:

"The original story, by Stephen Vincent Benet, concerns a 19th-century New Hampshire farmer (James Craig) who, after four-and-twenty disasters, sells his soul to the devil (Walter Huston) and has to be rescued by Senator Webster (Edward Arnold). Sinning turns out to be a mistress (Simone Simon) in a Paris gown, and the whole thing is humourless and arty in the Germanic tradition in which the director was trained – doubtless the reason why it was admired at the time. * ”

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"A superb fantasy. A simple farmer sells his soul to the devil in exchange for riches, and requires the aid of the famed lawyer to get it back. Richly textured images and an engaging folksiness are the strong points of this handsome adaptation of Stephen Vincent

Benet's American fable. Huston is impeccably roguish as the bearded Scratch, Arnold is the picture of heroic advocacy as his legal adversary, and Simone Simon is bewitching as an unearthly seductress. Running times vary from 85 to 112 minutes originally. **** ”

The Time Out Film Guide review:

“A fascinating version of the Faust legend adapted from Stephen Vincent Benet's short story. Craig is the poor New Hampshire farmer in the 1840's driven to such straits that he swears he'd sell his soul for two cents, and up pops Mr Scratch (Huston in a wonderful personification of the devil of New England folklore). A rapid rise to fame and fortune follows, with Mr Scratch's handmaiden (the delightful Simon) temptingly on hand. Things get a little portentously patriotic when the seven years are up, Craig elects to have the famous orator/politician Daniel Webster (Arnold) defend him against Mr Scratch's claim for his soul, and Mr Scratch counters by summoning famous villains from history as judge and jury. But it all looks terrific, directed by Dieterle in his best expressionist mood, with superb sets (Van Nest Polglase), score (Bernard Hermann), camerawork (the great Joe August), and a township that looks as if it came straight out of a Grant Wood painting. **"DANIEL AND THE DEVIL"** is a cut version running 85 minutes.”

Video Movie Guide 1993 review:

“This wickedly witty tale, based on a Stephen Vincent Benet story, delivers some potent messages. Edward Arnold, so often cast as a despicable villain, is riveting as the noble Webster. This eloquent hero must defend ingenuous James Craig in a bizarre courtroom. Both of their immortal souls are at stake. Opposing Webster is Mr Scratch, also known as the Devil. Walter Huston gives a dazzling performance in the title role. **** ”

The Virgin Film Guide review:

“Absolutely marvellous. Two fascinating stalwarts, Arnold and Huston, have a go at each other in this witty fantasy based on the O. Henry Prize-winning Stephen Vincent Benet short story. The author reportedly had a hand in the film version with Dan Tothoroh. Jabez Stone (Craig) is a New England farmer having a difficult time making a living. When he

casually swears that he would sell his soul for enough money to make life easier, up pops Huston as Mr Scratch. This charming devil purchases Stone's soul in return for seven years of good luck. At first Stone thinks it's all an elaborate joke but then the money starts rolling in.

Sudden success transforms the simple, good-hearted Stone into a venal, cold-blooded businessman who now cheats his neighbours, ignores his wife (Shirley) and their new-born child, refuses to listen to his mother (Darwell), and even gives up going to church on Sundays, opting to play poker instead. His phenomenal luck makes the entire farming community suspicious. The situation worsens on the home front when Mr Scratch's temptingly beautiful emissary (Simon), an odd servant girl, comes to live with Stone's family. Stone builds a grand mansion and gives an elegant ball, inviting everyone, including the famous Daniel Webster (Arnold).

But everything goes wrong. Strange, crude people arrive and eat savagely at the banquet tables, and an equally strange band plays eerie music. All the guests, it seems, are people who have struck bargains with the Devil. The scene terrified Stone and he flees, following his family who he has run out of the mansion. He catches up with them on the road and his wife promises help. She goes to Webster, begging him to plead her husband's case. The great lawyer agrees to save his fellow New Englander if he can.

Arnold, though appearing only intermittently, is at his stentorian best and Huston steals the film as a roguish Devil full of snap, crackle and pop. Huston was nominated for an Oscar for his performance and the film won a richly deserved Oscar for Bernard Hermann's lively and eerie score. Director Dieterle does one of his finest ever jobs of directing with the telling of this picturesque tale, and August's camerawork is masterful. ***** ”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Sonny Bupp:

“Moyer (or Sonny) Bupp was the kid brother of Tommy Bupp, and they appeared together in **"STAR FOR A NIGHT"**, as in many films afterwards. Like (it often seems) about half the kid population of Hollywood, he had a one-film stand with **Our Gang** but failed to be re-engaged. His round baby face hadn't the engaging malice of Tommy's.

Sonny is best remembered now for his role in "**CITIZEN KANE**": not as Kane in the childhood flashback (that was Buddy Swan) but as Kane's son near the end. He was in short comedies with – among others – Robert Benchley, Edgar Kennedy, **Our Gang** and The Three Stooges."

[no listing in "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995" or "Variety Movie Guide 1993"]

No further information currently available. I dread these films with multiple titles – they have to be checked in each principal source under each separate title.

Clearly of very peripheral interest from the archive's standpoint, but the critics speak so highly of it one is itching to see the film anyway, yet it's rarely if ever shown on British television. Some years ago I saw an animated remake – "**THE DEVIL AND DANIEL MOUSE**" – which was also entertaining in its own right (having the devil utter the choice line "No more Mr Nice Guy!"). Faustian pact stories are many – "**CROSSROADS**" (86) with Ralph Macchio for example, "**ANGEL HEART**" (87), Disney's "**THE DEVIL AND MAX DEVLIN**" (81), or "**THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK**" (87). It's surprising that the cinema's preoccupation with all things Satanic in the 1980s and 90s did not land us with a special-effects laden rehash of this tale, but perhaps we should consider that a lucky escape.

Anne Shirley, 23 (real name Dawn Paris) was herself a former child star under the hokey name Dawn O'Day. Her films included "**SO BIG**" (32) and "**ANNE OF GREEN GABLES**" (35).

See also "**BADKONAK-E SEFID**" and "**BASHU**" - both recent Iranian films, and subject index under **ARAB WORLD / MIDDLE EAST**.