

Dark Mountain (film)

Dark Mountain is a 1944 American film noir crime film directed by William Berke. It is also known as ***Thunderbolt*** and ***Thunder Mountain***.

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Plot Summary

When forest ranger Don Bradley manages to rescue two horses from burning to death inside a building during a forest fire, he gets promoted to head of the Dark Mountain area. His friend Willie gets to follow him as his assistant.

His first week off Don goes to see his girlfriend Kay and asks her to marry him, but she tells him she can't, since she just married a merchant named Steve Downey. Crushed, Don returns to Dark Mountain.

Kay finds out that the man she married is a racketeer, operating on the black market. One day a government agent, Dave Lewis, arrives to investigate Steve's business. He is killed by one of Steve's goons, and the body dropped in the middle of the road, to make it look like he has been accidentally run over.

Kay decides to leave her husband, but he doesn't let her go. She is present and witness to when Steve kills one of his own men that he suspects have told the police about the operation. Steve then flees and brings Kay with him. He tells her that she is a criminal too, being an accomplice in the racketeering since her name is on the contract for his warehouse.

When Steve decides they will split up to easier get away from the police, Kay goes to Don for protection and advice. He gives her shelter in one of the mountain cabins but tells her to go to police as soon as possible.

<i>Dark Mountain</i>	
	
Directed by	William Berke
Produced by	William H. Pine (producer) William C. Thomas (producer)
Written by	Maxwell Shane
Story by	Paul Franklin Charles F. Royal
Starring	Robert Lowery
Music by	Willy Stahl
Cinematography	Fred Jackman Jr.
Edited by	Henry Adams
Production company	Pine-Thomas Productions
Distributed by	Paramount Pictures
Release date	September 1944
Running time	56 minutes
Country	United States

Steve manages to track Kay to the mountain cabin and tells Kay he will kill her if she reveals to anyone that he is there. Don brings Kay food every day, and soon realizes that she is not alone in the cabin.

Language	English
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Don and Willie plan a trap to catch Steve without risking to harm Kay. Over the short wave radio, they send a fake message that the police believe they are closing in on the fugitive near the Mexican border, to lure Steve out of hiding. Steve leaves the cabin, but he brings Kay with him again. He steals Don's truck, full of explosives, and drives off. Willie's dog catches up with the truck shortly after they leave and jumps in; he starts attacking Steve during the drive.

While the truck is still moving, Kay and the dog jump out through a door, and Willie flattens the tires with his gun. The truck goes off the road and explodes with Steve still in it. Kay throws herself in Don's arms and they are reunited.^[1]

Cast

- [Robert Lowery](#) as Don Bradley
- [Ellen Drew](#) as Kay Downey
- [Regis Toomey](#) as Steve Downey
- [Eddie Quillan](#) as Willie Dinsmire
- [Elisha Cook Jr.](#) as Whitey
- [Ralph Dunn](#) as Chief Sanford
- [Walter Baldwin](#) as Uncle Sam Bates
- [Rose Plumer](#) as Aunt Pattie Bates
- [Virginia Sale](#) as Aletha Bates
- [Byron Foulger](#) as Harvey Bates
- [Johnny Fisher](#) as Hunk, Henchman
- [Alex Callam](#) as Detective Dave Lewis
- [Eddie Kane](#) as Waiter
- [Angelo Desfis](#) as Bookkeeper

Production

The film was based on an original script called *Thunder Mountain* by Dean Franklin and Charles Royal. It bought by Pine-Thomas Productions in January 1944 as a vehicle for [Chester Morris](#).^[2] Morris however went into a film at Columbia, *The Adventure of Jim Burke* and was replaced by [Regis Toomey](#). [Helen Walker](#) was going to play the female lead but she went into *Abroad with Two Yanks* and was replaced by Ellen Drew. It was Ellen Drew's first film for a while.^[3]

[Dick Purcell](#) died of a heart attack shortly before he was supposed to make the film. He was replaced by [Carroll Nye](#) who had made the short *Soldiers of the Soil* for Pine Thomas.^[4]

Filming started 9 April 1944.^[5]

See also

- [List of American films of 1944](#)

External links

- *Dark Mountain* (<https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0036743/>) on IMDb
- *Dark Mountain* (<http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/72306/Dark-Mountain/>) at TCMDB
- Review of film (<https://archive.org/stream/variety155-1944-09#page/n9/mode/1up/search/pine-thomas>) at *Variety*
- *Dark Mountain* (https://archive.org/details/Dark_Mountain_1944) is available for free download at the [Internet Archive](#)

References

1. <http://www.tcm.com/tcmdb/title/72306/Dark-Mountain/#>
2. SCREEN NEWS HERE AND IN HOLLYWOOD New York Times 15 Jan 1944: 10.
3. Catherine' Revived as Mae West Subject: Ellen Drew Resumes Hollywood Film Career in Pine-Thomas Production Schallert, Edwin. Los Angeles Times 25 Mar 1944: 5.
4. Singer Beatrice Kay Signed for 'Horseshoe': Warners Hand Jack Chertok Production Reins on 'Land I Have Chosen' Schallert, Edwin. Los Angeles Times 12 Apr 1944: A8.
5. SCREEN NEWS HERE AND IN HOLLYWOOD: Toomey to Replace Morris in 'Dark Forest' New York Times 3 Apr 1944: 18.

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