

Angels With Dirty Faces

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 22 Dec 2002

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Nicholas Gevers — 22 Dec 2002, 07:29

I don't know if anyone has remarked on this before, but Michael Curtiz's late-'30s crime thriller ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES, starring James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart, may very well have been a primary inspiration for the opening of THE BOOK OF THE LONG SUN. There's a tall Catholic priest ministering to a poverty-stricken, crime-ridden parish; in a prominent scene, he plays basketball with the parish boys, to whom he is also teacher and moral guide; gangsters hover in the background, threatening (among many other things) the priest's integrity and good moral example. In particular, the basketball match becomes a symbolic ground on which principles of fairness and honesty are tested and perhaps broken...

Of course, the resemblance could be accidental.

--Nick Gevers.