DOUBLE INDEMNITY
SELF-GUIDED MOVIE LOCATION TOUR
COMPILED BY JEAN LAUGHTON.

MOTION PICTURE DAILY Review Double Indemnity by Milton Livingston April 24, 1944
Paramount's "Double Indemnity" rings the bell as a top-notch splendidly acted and brilliantly directed hard-bitten melodrama which packs unusual moments of gripping suspense. It is grade A film fare for the devotees of murder melodrama, with exhibitors provided with the box-office draw of Fred MacMurray, Barbara Stanwyck and Edward G. Robinson in selling to other customers. Without question it is one of the best films of this class, and full credit for making it so good to the director Billy Wilder. (1st paragraph)

Filmed Sept 27, 1943 - Nov 24, 1943 Depicting 1938 Los Angeles with some retakes in Dec & Jan due to scratches in the Negative
Filmed During WWII “Dim Out”
Premiered in Los Angeles Theaters August 10, 1944 @ Grauman’s Chinese / Fox Wilshire Beverly Hills
Fox Uptown Theater @ Western & Olympic / Loew’s State Theater Downtown

MEMO AUG 14, 1943 WAIVER FROM SCREEN ACTORS GUILD
The Guild will grant a waiver to Paramount Pictures, Inc. to photograph a Los Angeles Railway electric welder and his assistant working on the right-of-way of the above Company at 5th and Olive Streets, Los Angeles.
In their production “Double Indemnity”, Director Wilder, for one day only, August 14, 1943. It is understood that they will do no bits, parts, stunts or dialogue, and that the granting of this waiver does not create a precedent

1. The tour begins DOWNTOWN: W 5th ST & S Olive ST
The Opening Scene of Double Indemnity
Stand on 5th Street below Olive w/ Pershing Sq & Biltmore Hotel on your Left - Look up 5th St.
A coupe races down 5th Street through the intersection with Olive Street. We see the Biltmore Hotel on the left & the San Carlos Hotel on right with the Victory Square Drugstore on its ground level (Coca-Cola sign).
2. Walk down Olive St past Biltmore Hotel one block to **SW CORNER W 6th ST & S. OLIVE ST.** Position yourself same as the camera angle - looking back toward Pershing Square and Subway Terminal Bldg. with Biltmore on left.

**PRODUCTION REPORT PARAMOUNT 8/4/43**

**6TH STREET & OLIVE ST - LA INTERSECTION**

CALL TIME: 3:30AM  CAMERA: 3AM

REHEARSING 4AM- 540AM

1ST SHOT 540 AM - FINISHED 6 AM

8 EXTRAS / 8 EXTRAS WITH CARS

ALAN POMEROY DOUBLE FOR MACMURRAY

GORDON CARVATH TRUCK DRIVER

SHOOTING EARLY MORNING SCENES TO BE USED FOR NIGHT SCENES IN THE PICTURE PRODUCTION IF THEY LOOK OK

**NIGHT FILTER SHOTS**

1:48 Walter Neff barely misses a Los Angeles Examiner Truck at the intersection of Olive St. & 6th St. The Philharmonic Auditorium in the background opened as The Temple Auditorium in 1906 with the production of “Aida” - Demolished 1985.

Notice the 2 lamp street lights which replaced the 5 Globe street lights in the 1920s.

There was a Memo to Mr. George Bertholon regarding the exact wording for the ‘LA Examiner’ truck as per the paper’s promotion Mgr Brandman

FYI The Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Building (PacMutual) is on 6th Street Between Olive & Grand. Even though it is not a film location for the exterior of Pacific All-Risk in the film. The name was changed from General Fidelity in Cain’s original novel - more fitting for Neff’s character.
3. La GOLONDRINA RESTAURANT - Downtown @ 17 Olvera Street

Head SW on W 6th Street (.3 mile) toward S. Hill St. - Turn Left on S Main - 1.1 mile location on the Right

**ACTUAL SHOOTING TOOK PLACE AT PARAMOUNT STUDIOS BACKLOT “NEW YORK STREETS”**

You may want to visit the restaurant for its historic aspect - but the real scenes were filmed on the Paramount Backlot

1:17:34 - Walter Neff is trying to distract Lola from her idea that Phyllis is the killer of her father by taking her to dinner. “NEFF’S VOICE: So I took her to dinner that evening at a Mexican joint down on Olvera Street where nobody would see us.”

(Billy Wilder / Raymond Chandler Script)
“Put simply, the movie has a very firm sense of place - no movie, documentary or fictional, offers a better sense of how the Los Angeles of its moment looked - but at the same time it energizes the reality with a subtle air of menace. And few movies of any era have more deliciously proved the writerly adage that landscape is character. You could charge LA as a co-conspirator in the crimes this movie relates.” Richard Schickel, Double Indemnity, BFI Film Classics, London, 1992

4. WALTER NEFF APARTMENT BUILDING  1825 N. Kinsley Drive Between Franklin & Hollywood

We now travel from downtown to Hollywood to Walter Neff’s apartment building where so much conspired - Exterior Shots Only

The apartment building feels very much the same with the parking garage door to the right - no canopies on the apt. windows now. (PRIVATE RESIDENCE - DO NOT DISTURB)  FILMED ON OCTOBER 20, 1943 CALL TIME 6PM / FINISHED 12:15AM

“I didn't feel like eating dinner when I left, and I didn't feel like a show, so I drove home, put the car away and went up to my apartment”

Neff Voiceover (Billy Wilder/ Raymond Chandler script)

59:41 in film - After the Murder - Neff coming up from the parking garage continuing his ruse that he never left his apartment.

59:58 in the film - when Neff “couldn’t hear my own footsteps” The background building next door is still the same.

Walk past Neff’s apartment building (canopy) toward Hollywood Blvd. to trace Neff’s steps and match up background buildings.
NEFF APARTMENT FILMED ON STAGE 8 & 9

Photo AMPAS
5. 5500 HOLLYWOOD BLVD @ WESTERN AVENUE SW CORNER
Head South on N. Kinsley toward Hollywood Blvd. .2 mile - Turn Right onto Hollywood Blvd. - Destination on your left in .3 miles
Stand across the street on the NW corner of Hollywood & Western, as per camera angle in film. Lola asks to be dropped at “Vermont & Franklin” which is really this location. The 4-story art deco Mayer Building was designed by S. Charles Lee and built by Louis B. Mayer & Irving Thalberg. It opened on Dec 8, 1928. It was the first location of Motion Picture Association of America and Central Casting. It also housed the Hays Office. At the time of filming, Newman Drug Store was on the ground level. Holly-Western Bowling Academy & Billiards was on the lower level. It became Hollywood Billiards which was the oldest Billiard Hall in Hollywood.

38:27 Nino Zachette waits for Lola at “Vermont & Franklin” which is really NW corner Hollywood Blvd. & Western Avenue with the Mayer Building behind him.

Current View of Mayer Building
Photo: Noelle Swan Gilbert

From “The Story of Hollywood: An Illustrated History”...

“The Mayer Building’s architect, S. Charles Lee, later became a prominent designer of movie theaters. Lee playfully put naked friezes on the facade of the Mayer building expressing “The Spirit of Hollywood” even though the Hays office pursued keeping nudity off the movie screens. At the opening on a Saturday night in December 1928, Norma Shearer unlocked the door with a golden key.

Hollywood and Western became the most important corner for the 17,000 men, women and children registered as movie extras. The hallway served as a hangout. Registrants filled out forms that ruthlessly asked for physical characteristics in case a casting director needed a rubber-faced man or a short woman with fat legs.”


Matchbook Cover from Holly - Western Bowling from MartinTurnbull.com

When watching the film you can see the sign (as above) behind Zachette Billiards / Bowling.

Photo: Central Casting
6. DIETRICHSON HOUSE 6301 QUEBEC DRIVE  Head West on Hollywood Blvd toward Garfield Pl. 2 mi / Turn Right onto N Wilton Pl. .3 mi / Turn left and cross street onto Franklin Ave. .4 mi / turn right N Beachwood Dr. .3 mi / turn left onto Scenic Ave. .2 mi / turn right onto Primrose 456 ft / continue onto Aleyona Dr. .1 mi / Turn Right onto El Contento Dr. .2 mi / Turn Left onto Quebec Dr house on right  (PRIVATE RESIDENCE PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB)  

The 1927 Spanish Revival home is where Neff first met scantily clad Phyllis Dietrichson. The house is in historic Beachwood Canyon where Hollywoodland was born. You can see how the view across the street and across to Hollywood has changed as you look to your left driving up to the Dietrichson House.

THE INTERIORS OF THE DIETRICHSON HOUSE WERE FILMED ON STAGES 8 & 9 @ PARAMOUNT - SOME EXT SHOTS OF THE HOUSE WERE ALSO FILMED ON STAGE 8 AS WELL AS THE NEW YORK STREETS AND BOSTON BACKLOTS

"Like for instance, Double Indemnity. I had to find a house that is typical for a guy like the husband of Barbara Stanwyck. Two stories I wanted, because I wanted to photograph her coming down the steps with the anklet. The art director lived in a house like this, and what I wanted, what I was trying for with my cameraman, John Seitz - he was a very old man. (smiles) Only fifty-one at the time and had done pictures with Valentino - was a very specific thing. I told him that whenever I come into a house like this, whenever I opened the door and the sun was coming in, there was always dust in the air. Because they never dusted it. And I asked him, “Could you get that effect?” And he could.  

(Richard Schickel Double Indemnity British Film Institute)  

They built a set at Paramount Studios - copying the house almost exactly  
Art Direction Hans Drier  Set Decorator Betram Granger

Stanwyck on the set of the 'Dietrichson House' at Paramount Studios   STAGE 8  Photo: AMPAS

Security National Bank Collection, Los Angeles Public Library, photos.lapl.org

Modern View of Dietrichson House Left  (LA Times Article)  and Paramount Set Above
DOUBLE INDEMNITY
Self - Guided Movie Location Tour
Compiled by Jean Laughton

7. HOLLYWOOD BOWL 2301 HIGHLAND AVENUE Not An Actual Shooting Location

THE HOLLYWOOD BOWL TRANSPARENCIES WERE SHOT ON JULY 8, 1943 - THE SCENES WITH LOLA & WALTER WERE LATER FILMED ON STAGE 8 @ PARAMOUNT STUDIOS ON NOVEMBER 15, 1943

You may want to visit the historic Hollywood Bowl. If so, you may also want to visit THE HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE MUSEUM just across the street which is in the Lasky - DeMille barn and is the building where Paramount Pictures originated.

Across from the Hollywood Bowl is the HOLLYWOOD HERITAGE MUSEUM housed in the Lasky - DeMille Barn which is where Paramount Pictures started. Built in 1895 on Robert Northam's Hollywood citrus ranch. It was sold in 1904 to Jacob Stern. The barn was at the southeast corner of Selma and Vine Streets. In March 1913, it was purchased by L. L. Burns (founder of Western Costume Company) and Harry Revier. The pair rented the barn, now called the Burns and Revier Studio and Laboratory, as a film location. In December of that year, Cecil B. DeMille, in association with Jesse Lasky, leased the barn and studio facilities for $250.00 a month establishing the Jesse L. Lasky Feature Play Company and began production of The Squaw Man (1914), the first feature film to be produced in the Hollywood area. In 1926, the barn was moved to the back lot of United Studios, where present day Paramount was later built. It went through several uses as a film set, research library, conference area and later the Paramount gymnasium.

In October 1979, the barn was moved off the Paramount lot to a vacant lot in Hollywood. It was then moved by the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce to the parking lot of The Hollywood Palace theater, where it was boarded up and fenced in until a permanent site could be found.

The Lasky-DeMille Barn was acquired by Hollywood Heritage, Inc., in February 1983. It was then moved to its present site at the southern end of the parking lot of the Hollywood Bowl, where it was restored and made into the Hollywood Heritage Museum.

Under the stewardship of Hollywood Heritage, Inc., the Lasky-DeMille Barn, built in 1901, was restored and currently houses the Hollywood Heritage Museum. The story of the early Hollywood motion picture industry and the historic Hollywood community is told through archival photographs, historic documents, movie props and related memorabilia. Visitors experience the actual structure where Cecil B. DeMille's office exists, furnished with selected personal DeMille belongings, and where countless movies were filmed and studio staff worked and played.
DOUBLE INDEMNITY  
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8. EL ROYALE APT 450 N. ROSSMORE - The Parking Garage in Walter Neff’s Building in the Film

Directions from Hollywood Bowl: Get on 101 from Hollywood Bowl Rd    Take Vine St to N Rossmore Ave 2.4 mi
PRIVATE RESIDENCE - NO PUBLIC ACCESS TO PARKING GARAGE  A DRIVE BY TO SEE THE BEAUTIFUL EXTERIOR IS RECOMMENDED. Spanish & French Colonial Revival Building opened in 1929. It was designed by famed architect William Douglas Lee.

This is where the filming of the downstairs parking garage scenes took place - not at the N. Kinsley Neff apartment. We first see Walter Neff (47:47) in his parking garage as he establishes an alibi with the attendant, Charlie, saying he is staying in for the night.

Actors including Clark Gable, Loretta Young, Harry Langdon, and Helen Morgan, and writer William Faulkner all called the El Royale home. Though it is said that Mae West's application was denied due to her loose character (she ended up at the nearby Ravenswood instead), this legend should probably be taken with a grain of salt. One of the most popular tenants during the 1930s was the notorious actor/Mob associate George Raft, who lived in one of the penthouses and even threw a birthday party for a friend's child in the reception room. (Curbed LA)

INTERIOR GARAGE SHOTS FILMED ON NOVEMBER 8, 1943   CALL TIME 9am - FINISHED 5:45  
THE SHOTS OF WALTER WALKING DOWN THE INTERIOR STAIRS OF HIS APARTMENT BUILDING TO THE GARAGE WERE SHOT AT THE WRITER'S ANEX BUILDING AT PARAMOUNT STUDIOS
9. JERRY’S MARKET - formerly at 5330 Melrose Avenue - Across from Paramount Studios

**Now Raleigh Studios** From El Royale Head N. on N Rossmore Towards Rosewood .3 mi / Turn Right onto Melrose .6 mi

**The original building is long gone** - Below is a historical photograph to match up the view down and across Melrose when the Western Costume Building still stood. **THE EXTERIORS AND SHOTS OF PHYLLIS as below WERE SHOT ON LOCATION - THE INTERIOR SHOTS OF JERRY’S WERE SHOT ON STAGE 11 @ PARAMOUNT STUDIOS ACROSS THE STREET**

Exterior Shot: Jerry’s Market 5330 Melrose Avenue
In the film Neff refers to a big market up in Los Feliz. There was a Los Feliz Market @ Vermont & Franklin. This is the actual filming location.

Melrose Avenue from Van Ness Corner Looking West
Jerry’s on Left (see arrow) Western Costume Building (now gone) is on the right and behind it is Marathon Street and just West is the Historic Bronson Street Entrance to Paramount Studios

Photo: Bison Archives / Marc Wanamaker
View of Marathon St. which runs parallel to Melrose. Here, the Bronson Gate, which would be very close to the Western Costume Building across from Jerry’s Market

Filming on Set: PARAMOUNT STAGE 11
Police presence due to fear of food being stolen during war rationing
Photo Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences
2 plain clothes Cops were put in the scenes with the Extras

Filming on Location at “Jerry’s Market” on Stage 11 @ Paramount

Parking for Jerry’s just west of the store and across from Paramount on Melrose. Photo courtesy of Bison Archives Marc Wanamaker you can see in the film at 39.44

Current View Down Melrose standing at Van Ness
Raleigh Studios (Jerry’s) L and Paramount Pictures R
“GLENDALE” TRAIN STATION which is really BURBANK SOUTHERN PACIFIC STATION
THIS LOCATION NO LONGER PHYSICALLY EXISTS
Once Located at 201 N. Front Street it burned down in 1981 and was then demolished

Many sources list the Glendale Train station as the shooting location for Double Indemnity when, actually, it was the Burbank Southern Pacific Station in Burbank, California. For filming, they put up the GLENDALE prop sign. I saw the location listed on the IMDB site. I did a search which led me to the amazing John Bengtson’s Silent Locations site where he mentioned it and led me to Lindsay Blake’s iamnotastalker.org site where she verified it with a link to this historical photograph of the building which has since burned down in the 80’s and was then demolished.

Phyllis and her ‘husband’ arrive @ the ‘Glendale’ Station
Actual Burbank Southern Pacific Station Film Location

THE SHOOT HAD TO RELOCATE TO BURBANK IN ORDER TO GET THE RIGHT TRAIN EQUIPMENT AND WORK AROUND WWII DIM OUT REGULATIONS
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TWO ADDITIONAL LOCATIONS WHICH NO LONGER EXIST BUT I THOUGHT YOU MAY FIND INTERESTING

1. HERBERT'S DRIVE IN: SE CORNER of FAIRFAX AND BEVERLY (now CBS Studios)
   2nd UNIT TRANSPARENCY FILMING ONLY - NO PRINCIPALS USED ... SCENE WITH NEFF SHOT AT PARAMOUNT STUDIOS on MELROSE

   NEFF PULLS INTO “Herbert’s Rear Screen Projection”
   TO GET A BEER TO CALM HIS NERVES AFTER HIS TELLING MEETING WITH PHYLLIS

   I came across this photo and location on Martin Turnbull's site

1. LA CIENEGA LANES: 8491 SANTA MONICA BOULEVARD @ LA CIENEGA
   In the film he claims it is 3rd & Western

   “... so I dropped by a bowling alley at Third and Western and rolled a few lines to get my mind thinking about something else for a while.”

   This image and other great ads on Martin Turnbull's Site

   This photograph shows the bowling alley a bit later when it was owned by Art Linkletter
DOUBLE INDEMNITY
Self-Guided Movie Location Tour
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Thank you to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences for allowing me to share this Paramount Pictures Production Phone List from Double Indemnity with you!

Thanks! I hope you enjoyed retracing some of the locations from DOUBLE INDEMNITY.

Don’t Forget about Touring PARAMOUNT STUDIOS to see the Original Sound Stages

Jean Laughton