

Citizen Kane PDF (Limited Copy)

Harlan Lebo



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Citizen Kane Summary

The Rise and Fall of a Media Titan

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About the book

In "Citizen Kane: The Ultimate Guide to the Film," Harlan Lebo unravels the intricate layers of Orson Welles' groundbreaking masterpiece, exploring its profound exploration of ambition, loss, and the elusive nature of truth. This compelling narrative not only dissects the film's innovative techniques and rich symbolism but also serves as a poignant reflection on the life of Charles Foster Kane, a character whose rise and fall mirrors the complexities of the American Dream. As Lebo deftly navigates through the film's celebrated moments and behind-the-scenes anecdotes, readers are invited to reconsider the legacy of Kane and the lens through which we perceive success and happiness. Join Lebo in this captivating journey through cinema's most lauded film, and discover how one man's quest for power ultimately reveals the fragility of human connection.

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About the author

Harlan Lebo is an accomplished writer, journalist, and filmmaker known for his insightful analysis of cinema and its cultural impact. With a background that merges both scholarly inquiry and creative storytelling, Lebo has contributed extensively to film literature, often focusing on classic movies and their enduring legacies. His book "Citizen Kane: A Visual and Cultural History" delves into the complexities of Orson Welles' iconic film, examining its artistic innovations and the various interpretations that have emerged over the decades. Lebo's expertise not only reflects his passion for film but also his commitment to exploring the narratives that shape our understanding of media and society.

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Chapter 1 Summary: 1. Asking for the Impossible

In August 1940, the atmosphere in Southern California was idyllic, a refreshing change from the oppressive summer heat across the rest of the country. In Culver City, a location steeped in Hollywood's cinematic history, a new and groundbreaking film was in the works, "Citizen Kane." On August 15, as the production team set about creating a historically rich newspaper office set, a young director by the name of Orson Welles was busy overseeing the early stages of his first film. Welles, only twenty-five and already wearing many hats as a director, producer, co-writer, and star, was not merely navigating Hollywood's film industry; he was about to redefine it.

The making of *Citizen Kane* is a tale marked by stark contrasts—celebrating artistic brilliance while illustrating a struggle against corporate control. It is a narrative woven into the fabric of both Hollywood's glamorous soundstages and the cutthroat realms of business in New York City, amplifying a crusade against freedom of expression. The fact that Welles, a newcomer with no previous experience in filmmaking, could create a film so universally acclaimed speaks volumes about the extraordinary talent he possessed.

1. The Meteoric Rise of Welles: Orson Welles' ascent to prominence began not in Hollywood but on Broadway, radio, and eventually in film. By



1939, a mere four years after his teenage foray into theater, Welles was the talk of the town. He captivated audiences with his remarkable storytelling, and by the age of twenty-four, he had made waves big enough to eventually facilitate his entry into cinema.

2. A Prodigy's Backstory: Born in 1915, Welles exhibited prodigious talent early on, displaying an innate ability to absorb and articulate complex ideas. His upbringing, marred by parental separation and loss, shaped his unique sensibilities, fostering a blend of creativity and resilience. These formative experiences propelled him toward the arts, allowing him to captivate audiences long before he set foot in Hollywood.

3. His Theatrical Innovations: Welles quickly established himself in theater through his work with the Mercury Theatre, where he produced several groundbreaking, politically charged productions including a modern-dress *Julius Caesar* that challenged the norms of its time. His innovative approach transformed traditional theater, showcasing his passion for creativity and ambition.

4. Radio Stardom and Controversy: Welles' notable achievement on radio, particularly the infamous October 30, 1938 broadcast of *The War of the Worlds*, catapulted him to widespread fame. A Halloween prank intended as entertainment ignited nationwide panic, demonstrating his influence and reach. This event not only positioned Welles under the media



spotlight but punctuated his eventual transition to film—Hollywood executives recognized his immense potential resulting from the chaos he inadvertently created.

5. The Allure of Hollywood: Despite initial resistance to motion pictures, the financial pressure and dwindling success in theater opened the door for Welles to consider Hollywood. RKO, a studio known for its ups and downs, offered Welles the creative freedom he craved, allowing him to negotiate a contract that would grant him substantial artistic authority—something rare for a newcomer in the film industry.

6. Strategic Negotiation: Welles' desire for autonomy led him to make bold demands when signing with RKO. Amidst the tumult of his career and the media frenzy surrounding him, he skillfully sought to establish the terms of his work. This culminated in a contract that not only conferred financial stability but positioned him to innovate within the filmmaking process.

As the tale of **Citizen Kane** unfolds, it becomes clear that Welles' genius is a blend of talent, audacity, and a desire for freedom to express his artistic vision. The film would emerge not only as a personal milestone for Welles but as a revolutionary work in cinematic history, forever altering the landscape of American filmmaking.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: Creativity in the Face of Adversity

Critical Interpretation: Just like Orson Welles, you too can embrace your unique talents and perspectives, even when faced with obstacles. Welles' journey from the stages of Broadway to the groundbreaking film **Citizen Kane** is a powerful reminder that creativity can flourish in adverse conditions. Don't let your circumstances define you; instead, let them fuel your resolve to carve your own path. Be audacious in your pursuits, seek out opportunities for artistic expression, and negotiate your own terms in the world, just as Welles did. Your vision has the potential to redefine norms and inspire others—just dare to take the leap.

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Chapter 2 Summary: 2. The Beard and the Contract

In Chapter 2 of Harlan Lebo's "Citizen Kane," the narrative centers around Orson Welles' groundbreaking contract with RKO Pictures, which granted him unprecedented creative control in an industry dominated by studio executives. This agreement, likened to walking a tightrope, stunned Hollywood insiders accustomed to stringent studio oversight. Welles' contract featured clauses that provided him complete supervision over his productions, including the coveted final cut, a privilege almost unheard of for a newcomer, let alone a young director.

1. Welles' landmark contract with RKO was a radical departure from the established norms. It effectively handed over creative power to a young and relatively inexperienced filmmaker, allowing him to write, direct, and produce films with minimal interference from the studio. The arrangement set an explosive precedent, drawing both admiration and animosity from established directors and executives who feared losing their own power in the system.

2. An underlying theme of the chapter is the volatile atmosphere at RKO during Welles' appointment. George Schaefer's leadership and the progressive philosophy of promoting quality films faced stiff opposition from colleagues who felt that granting Welles such control undermined the financial safety of the studio. This tension manifested as studio politics rife



with intrigue and rivalries.

3. While Welles' agreement initially seemed to promise a new era for creative freedom, it was not without limitations. The studio retained certain rights, including budget approval for projects exceeding \$500,000 and the authority to vet contentious subject matters. Nevertheless, these concessions paled in comparison to the liberties Welles gained, marking a substantial shift in filmmaker autonomy.

4. As Welles settled into Hollywood, his flamboyant persona, including a distinctive beard from his theater days, alienated some while charming others. He was seen as both a prodigy and a pariah; media critics speculated on his ability to fulfill the lofty expectations set by the contract, predicting potential failure. Yet, many established filmmakers celebrated Welles' spirit, interpreting his struggle as a fight for artistic freedom that could benefit the industry at large.

5. Ultimately, as Welles began to navigate the RKO system, he faced significant production challenges, particularly following the outbreak of World War II, which severely disrupted the film business. Budget constraints and the loss of international markets forced Welles and Schaefer to reconsider initial projects, delaying the start of actual film production.

6. The chapter concludes with Welles teaming up with screenwriter Herman



Mankiewicz, whose erratic genius complemented Welles' own ambitions. Together, they adapted their ideas into what would become "Citizen Kane," a film that promised to explore complex themes of power and identity seen through the eyes of a multifaceted protagonist. The partnership ultimately culminated in the genesis of a cinematic masterpiece, despite the myriad challenges they faced in its creation.

This narrative foreshadows a transformative chapter in cinematic history, illustrating the artistic and commercial risks that accompany the pursuit of innovation in a tightly controlled industry.

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Chapter 3: 3. The Script

In the evolution of "Citizen Kane," the journey of its script began in a remote desert setting, where Herman J. Mankiewicz, along with his collaborator John Houseman, secluded themselves in Victorville to craft the screenplay. Their choice of this tranquil location—away from the distractions of Hollywood—allowed them to focus solely on the creative process, with Mankiewicz struggling against personal vices under Houseman's watchful eye. The initial drafts surrounded the life of Charles Foster Kane, a complex character inspired by Mankiewicz's own experiences, and highlighted the challenges of his rise and fall within the world of newspaper publishing.

1. Character Development and Collaboration: The character of Kane emerged through discussions and ideas exchanged between Mankiewicz and director Orson Welles. Mankiewicz's distinct method of dictation shaped the flow of the screenplay, and his original draft, "American," underwent significant evolution as it amalgamated Mankiewicz's real-life tragedies with fictional elements. As the writing progressed, the characters were not

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Chapter 4 Summary: 4. The Consequences of His Actions

In the retrospective analysis of "Citizen Kane," the contentious debates surrounding the film's authorship are exemplified by competing claims between scriptwriters Herman J. Mankiewicz and Orson Welles. This discourse began even before the film's release, escalating as "Citizen Kane" gained legendary status. Both Welles and Mankiewicz possessed their own perspectives on the collaborative writing effort, leading to a dual narrative about the creative process behind this iconic film.

1. The Credit Controversy: The infighting began when Mankiewicz felt slighted by Welles' public assertion of sole authorship in a newspaper column. Mankiewicz's outrage caused a stir within the Mercury Productions team, as he fought for recognition and threatened to publicize his grievances if not duly credited. Welles maintained that he contributed significantly to the script and that the final screenplay was the result of a synthesis of both writers' works.

2. Historical Context: The conflict reflects a broader trend in Hollywood during the studio era where it was common for writers to contribute anonymously, often leading to disputes over credit. Mankiewicz, experienced in navigating this system, had previously agreed to cede credit in exchange for his work on "Citizen Kane," as indicated by a clause in his contract with RKO.



3. The Authors' Contributions: Despite the tensions, Welles later recognized the profound influence of Mankiewicz's initial draft, acknowledging that without Mankiewicz's ideas, the film would have significantly differed. Mankiewicz introduced key plot elements, characters, and the iconic "Rosebud" motif, while Welles' edits honed the narrative, emphasizing emotional depth and thematic clarity over extensive dialogue.

4. The Evolution of the Script: Critical analysis reveals the extensive evolution of the "Citizen Kane" screenplay throughout its development. The earliest drafts featured superfluous details that were ultimately trimmed in favor of a more concise narrative structure. Welles' revisions eliminated unnecessary plot points and focused on the emotional consequences of Kane's choices rather than merely recounting events.

5. Characterization of Kane: Welles approached the character of Charles Foster Kane with a focus on his inherent complexities, seeking to capture Kane's essence through his actions rather than explicit motivations. This perspective contrasted with Mankiewicz's portrayal, which centered more on surface-level traits and societal critiques.

6. Impact of Editing: The editing process during production involved significant last-minute revisions by Welles, enhancing both the pacing and the emotional weight of scenes. His penchant for cutting extraneous dialogue



and preserving visual storytelling became a hallmark of his directorial style, aiming to cultivate a film that resonated psychologically with viewers.

7. Reception and Legacy: Despite its groundbreaking narrative technique, "Citizen Kane" was met with mixed initial critical responses mainly because of the vagueness surrounding Kane as a character. Critics struggled with Welles' refusal to clarify Kane's motivations, perceiving it as a flaw. Ultimately, this ambiguity became a defining trait of the film, fostering a sense of intrigue and engagement with the audience.

In summary, the intricate interplay between Welles and Mankiewicz illustrated not only the challenges of collaborative creativity in Hollywood but also laid the groundwork for a film that would resonate deep themes of power, failure, and the quest for understanding one's own life amidst its chaotic pursuits. Their contributions, filtered through a complex editing process, forged "Citizen Kane" into a cinematic masterpiece, demonstrating the profound impact of both collaborative and individual artistic visions on the film's enduring legacy.



Critical Thinking

Key Point: The value of collaboration in creativity

Critical Interpretation: Consider how the creative tensions and collaborative spirit in the making of 'Citizen Kane' can inspire you to embrace teamwork in your own life. Just as Mankiewicz and Welles navigated their differences to create something extraordinary, you too can recognize that collaboration often breeds innovation. Allow yourself to be open to others' ideas, engage in discussions, and sometimes, like Welles, be willing to refine and edit your own contributions for the greater good of the project. Through collaboration, not only can you elevate the quality of your work, but you may also discover new perspectives that challenge your thinking, pushing the boundaries of what you believe is possible.



Chapter 5 Summary: 5. RKO Production #281

During the production of "Citizen Kane," Orson Welles exhibited unwavering confidence in the film's significance, a sentiment echoed in his later interviews. In collaboration with screenwriters Herman Mankiewicz and John Houseman, Welles navigated preproduction intricacies, securing approvals from studio executives while vividly narrating the film's story and staging, even acting out parts himself. This led the project to be designated as "RKO Production #281," moving forward despite earlier film setbacks faced by Welles.

As preparations unfolded over the spring and summer of 1940, Welles, now stepping into the role of producer, efficiently organized a fusion of artistry and technology to transition from script to screen. Drawing from experiences gained during previous productions, he effectively tapped into Hollywood's skilled craftsmen, collaborating with a vast network of specialized technicians. While his ambition sometimes caused friction, particularly regarding script credits with Mankiewicz, Welles' appreciation for collaboration allowed him to assemble a remarkable talent pool, including established artists and those new to films, cultivating a unique creative environment for "Citizen Kane."

Casting was a critical component at this stage, and Welles showcased his distinct talent for selecting performers, often choosing from his Mercury



Theatre troupe. Actors like Joseph Cotten and Ruth Warrick were integral in portraying clear-cut character roles, while Welles sought to fill each part with actors who could embody the attributes he'd envisioned. This casting process extended to notable figures like Everett Sloane and Agnes Moorehead, all of whom contributed significantly to the film's intricate character dynamics.

The atmosphere aboard the set was further enriched by Welles' intentional incorporation of personal touches, utilizing friends' names and traits as character references. This intimate connection to the material fostered a deeper authenticity in performances. While many actors initially lacked extensive film experience, Welles viewed this as a benefit, believing their fresh perspectives would enable freer and more innovative portrayals, contrasting the conventional styles prevalent among seasoned Hollywood actors.

Significantly, Welles cast himself in the lead role of Charles Foster Kane, a decision that underlined the film's dependence on his multifaceted performance. Despite potential skepticism from studio executives, Welles' established reputation as a dynamic actor reassured them of the film's prospects. His commitment to genuinely embodying Kane would prove a substantial challenge as it required portraying a complex character through various life stages while simultaneously managing the production responsibilities.



In summary, "Citizen Kane" arose from a harmonious blend of Welles' visionary ambitions, collaboration with talented peers, and his personal investments in the project's integrity. His commitment to innovative filmmaking methods and nurturing a collaborative environment ultimately paved the way for the film's groundbreaking success, solidifying its legacy as a cinematic milestone.

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Chapter 6: 6. A Great Deal of Doing

In the creation of *Citizen Kane*, Orson Welles assembled an innovative team, including cinematographer Gregg Toland and designer Perry Ferguson. From the spring of 1940, they convened to meticulously plan every detail of the film, laying a robust foundation that defined the visual and storytelling techniques employed throughout. During their collaborative sessions, they established a comprehensive visual plan, honing the script and camera angles to ensure that each shot contributed integral meaning to the narrative rather than serving merely as a technical display.

1. Planning for Innovation: The extended preproduction period allowed for thorough planning, distinguishing *Citizen Kane* from the rapid-fire assembly-line nature of typical Hollywood productions. Welles' approach combined traditional cinematic tools with innovative techniques that pushed the boundaries of filmmaking. With filmmaking becoming a collaborative symphony, meetings became educational sessions for Welles, where he absorbed the practical aspects of cinematography and design from Toland and Ferguson.

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Chapter 7 Summary: 7. No Visitors, Please

Chapter 7 of "Citizen Kane" by Harlan Lebo offers an in-depth look into the production process of Orson Welles' groundbreaking film. The chapter begins with Welles, at the helm of his first major film project, showcasing both his creativity and the growing pains of transitioning from stage to film. Welles' intense passion for the craft is evidenced through the meticulous scenes shot, particularly the intricate breakfast room sequence meant to depict the gradual decline of Kane's marriage to Emily.

1. Filming Techniques and Progress The filming of significant scenes began on July 30, 1940, marking the commencement of RKO Production #281. Welles dedicated extensive time to rehearsals before rolling the cameras, emphasizing layers of depth in storytelling through visual techniques. The breakfast table sequence was shot over several days to effectively portray the passage of time and emotional distance between the characters. Makeup artist Maurice Seiderman played a crucial role, gradually changing the actors' appearances to signify their aging.

2. Press and Publicity: A singular press event was held shortly after filming began, providing minimal insight into the project. Welles was adept at evading questions about the plot, instilling a sense of mystery that only heightened interest. Trade publications speculated on the film's themes, with hints about its connections to a real-life publisher, reflecting the early buzz



surrounding Citizen Kane.

3. Production Challenges: Throughout the shoot, Welles faced the challenges of practical filmmaking, drawing the attention of his team, including cinematographer Gregg Toland, who mentored him in the nuances of film direction. Welles struggled with basic on-set logistics and the dynamics differencing from stagecraft. The narrative highlights his journey transitioning from uncertainty to a confident directorial style through trial and error, with an emphasis on the necessity for understanding the technical aspects of filmmaking.

4. Collaboration and Control: Welles' leadership style inspired creativity among his cast and crew, revered for his ability to elicit strong performances. His assistant, William Alland, served as Welles' eyes on set, signaling whether takes succeeded or needed further work. This collaborative atmosphere was vital to the film's success but also highlighted Welles' intense, sometimes erratic, work habits.

5. Secrecy and Resistance: The chapter delves into Welles' desire for a "closed set," restricting visitors to minimize distractions and external pressures from studio executives, who were often skeptical of his innovative methods. Welles' tactics, including playful resistance such as baseball games when studio heads arrived, showcased his determination to maintain creative freedom.



6. Exhausting Production Schedule: The workdays for the cast and crew were grueling, with reports of extended hours often crossing into the early morning. Welles pushed his team to their limits, reflecting his ambition and commitment to producing something remarkable. However, this strain resulted in delayed schedules and pressures heightened by actor availability.

7. Innovative Cinematic Techniques The chapter explores how cinematographer Toland's deep-focus photography combined with Welles's vision led to seamless storytelling through transitions and visual continuity. Various techniques, such as dissolves and lighting changes, were employed to enhance narrative flow and emotional resonance, contributing to the film's groundbreaking status.

8. Staging and Production Design: Art director Robert Ferguson's detailed designs played a pivotal role in creating immersive settings that reflected the characters and themes of the film. Cost-effective set designs were both visually rich and deeply symbolic, playing an integral part in grounding the emotional core of the story.

9. Props and Significance: The strategic use of props throughout the film underscored important themes and character development, with recurring visual motifs that linked different narrative segments. Objects like the snow globe became symbols of nostalgia and lost innocence, affirming



the film's intricate layering.

10. Reception and Anticipation: As filming continued, various stakeholders began to express excitement. From studio executives to press coverage, there was a growing sense that "Citizen Kane" would be a notable achievement, setting the stage for its eventual impact on cinema history.

Through a detailed examination of the complex production dynamics, challenges, and innovative techniques, Chapter 7 illustrates Orson Welles' transformative journey as a filmmaker, setting the foundation for "Citizen Kane" as a cinematic landmark.

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Chapter 8 Summary: 8. Giggling Like Schoolboys

During the tumultuous production of "Citizen Kane" in the fall of 1940, Orson Welles and cinematographer Gregg Toland pioneered innovative filming techniques while managing both creative expression and cost efficiency. Welles infused the filming atmosphere with unmatched passion, notably during emotionally charged scenes such as when Kane violently destroys Susan Alexander's bedroom, evoking an electrifying presence that left onlookers such as William Alland astounded.

1. Creative Cost-Management: Toland adeptly economized on the set, utilizing clever camera angles, animated extra choreography, and imaginative effects to simulate large crowds with minimal personnel. For instance, an entire audience at Kane's political speech was created using just a handful of actors and painted backdrops that cleverly suggested movement and depth. In scenes depicting Susan's operatic performance, similar techniques gave the illusion of mass audiences by varying the depths and speeds of actors' movements. RKO Studio documents inflated casting numbers to reflect the total used throughout filming; however, in practice, many crucial shots rarely involved more than thirty performers.

2. Visual Techniques and Realism Toland's groundbreaking use of deep focus photography revolutionized film. This technique allowed multiple planes of action to remain in focus simultaneously, enhancing the realism of



the storytelling. Welles embraced Toland's methods, resulting in sequences where characters moved fluidly throughout sets, defying conventional Hollywood staging norms. This choice fostered a sense of intimacy between viewers and the characters. An example of this was the ingenious scene of Kane signing over his newspaper to Thatcher, captured in a single deep-focus shot that conveyed Kane's emotional turmoil without traditional cutaways.

3. Depth and Groundbreaking Structure: Employing sophisticated staging efforts, Welles and Toland created a new cinematic language. They harnessed unique set constructions and lighting techniques, such as positioned floodlights and special close-up lighting, to evoke distinct atmospheres corresponding to Kane's evolving character. Notably, Toland maintained clarity through "visual simplification," capturing entire scenes in long takes rather than cutting to different perspectives, which enriched the narrative flow and kept audiences engaged.

4. Commitment to Innovation: The production faced numerous challenges, including Welles' ankle injury, which led to unique outdoor filming conditions and extended shooting schedules. His commitment to delivering a compelling performance often resulted in comedic yet precarious interactions with crew members, creating a dynamic set environment. Adapting to various constraints, including budgetary limits and the need for extensive scenes, Welles pushed the boundaries of what was



achievable in cinema.

5. Collaborative Spirit: The script underwent continuous evaluation and rewriting, driven by Welles' impulse to enhance specific scenes and flesh out character dynamics. His adaptability on set enabled cast members' contributions to be woven seamlessly into the final product, enriching the film's authenticity. This collaborative atmosphere was reflected in how each actor's input, especially during on-set improvisations or adjustments, informed the screenplay's evolution.

6. Makeup and Transformation: Welles' transformative journey into the aging Kane was spearheaded by makeup artist Maurice Seiderman, who created a groundbreaking range of aging effects. Seiderman's intricate work included the creation of customized molds and latex appliances that allowed actors to convincingly portray their characters across decades. This detailed level of artistry contributed immensely to the film's emotional weight, allowing audiences to witness Kane's tumultuous life through an unfiltered lens.

In conclusion, the ambitious project of "Citizen Kane" saw Orson Welles' visionary approach met with collaboration and innovation, resulting in a film that not only challenged the norms of its time but also paved the way for future cinematic storytelling. Despite various challenges—including injuries, modifications in the script, and production delays—the craftsmanship



behind the camera and the deep focus lens offered an unparalleled, intimate look into the life of an iconic and flawed character, forever altering the landscape of filmmaking. Welles' declaration of completing the film "under budget and under schedule" contrasts with RKO's reports, yet for the standards of such a groundbreaking production, it is evident that the success of "Citizen Kane" lay in its playful yet unprecedented experimentation within the film industry.

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Chapter 9: 9. Cryptic Notes and Bigger Hams

In the intricate journey of crafting "Citizen Kane," the post-production phase revealed the dedication and ingenuity that underscored this cinematic landmark, exemplifying the collaborative spirit involved from shooting to final cut.

1. Following the wrap of principal photography, essential retakes were executed to fine-tune various scenes. Director Orson Welles, alongside editor Robert Wise, oversaw additional shoots to capture key moments such as glimpses of Kane's son and the nuanced interactions between Kane and his wife, Susan. Cinematographer Gregg Toland filmed poignant retakes, notably encapsulating Kane's death, before passing responsibilities to RKO's Harry Wild. Special care was taken during these sequences, with a continual focus on capturing both emotional depth and visual clarity.

2. The importance of special effects in "Citizen Kane" was initially underestimated due to the film's non-action-packed narrative. However, the final cut revealed that nearly 40 percent of the footage relied on techniques

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Chapter 10 Summary: 10. Conflict

In 1940, as Orson Welles began production on "Citizen Kane," rumors circulated that the film was a veiled exposé of the influential media mogul William Randolph Hearst. This speculation fueled intense scrutiny from Hollywood's gossip columnists, particularly Hedda Hopper and Louella Parsons, who initially supported Welles but soon turned against him after viewing an early cut of the film. The perception that "Citizen Kane" mirrored Hearst's life ignited a campaign by the Hearst organization aimed at discrediting Welles and suppressing the film.

Both columnists had previously promoted Welles, but their allegiance shifted as they allied with Hearst to protect his reputation. Hopper, after viewing the rough cut, declared it a malicious assault on Hearst, and immediately alerted him to the perceived threat, harboring her ambitions within the industry. The relationship dynamics between the columnists and Welles turned particularly volatile, as Parsons felt undermined by Hopper's early warning to Hearst.

The Hearst organization, driven by fear of the film's potential fallout, devised a multi-pronged strategy to thwart "Citizen Kane." They sought to investigate Welles' political affiliations, prevent the film's release by leveraging their extensive influence across Hollywood, and ultimately aimed to destroy the film completely, which ran counter to the ideals of free



expression upheld by the First Amendment. Hearst's formidable network of newspapers, magazines, and radio stations began a campaign to blacklist RKO's productions amid concerns that "Citizen Kane" could tarnish Hearst's legacy.

As 1941 began, Welles was caught in a storm of controversy. Public opinion had turned increasingly hostile, fueled by the sensationalist coverage from publications like "Friday Magazine," which painted "Citizen Kane" as an overt attack on Hearst and his legacy. This article, rife with inaccuracies and drawn from public perception rather than the film itself, cemented the narrative that Welles was a threat to Hearst's empire. Despite Welles' efforts to clarify that his film depicted a fictional character, the damage had been done; both Parsons and Hopper were determined to undermine the film's release.

In early January, following a screening attended by influential figures, Welles faced backlash from both columnists. Hopper labeled the film an evil act, while Parsons, deeply offended, organized a campaign against Welles, warning industry leaders of the repercussions they would face if they supported "Citizen Kane." Thus, Welles found himself not only defending his film but also grappling with the powerful machinations of media entities seeking to silence his voice.

Without concrete evidence of Hearst being the inspiration for his film,

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Welles endeavored to navigate the increasing pressure from the Hearst organization while receiving early praise from certain trade publications. The support from magazines like "Life" and "Look" didn't deter Parsons; she relentlessly sought to ensure that "Citizen Kane" was kept from theaters, exploiting her connections to orchestrate a boycott of RKO's productions.

A pivotal moment occurred when Parsons screened "Citizen Kane" with Hearst's lawyers, resulting in explosive fallout for Welles. Convinced of its connection to Hearst, Parsons sprung into action, contacting powerful studio heads and threatening dire repercussions if they dared to exhibit the film. Hearst's organization also swiftly retaliated by terminating advertising agreements with RKO and pulling any mentions of Welles or "Citizen Kane" from all Hearst publications.

Despite the negative pressure surrounding "Citizen Kane," the film's merits and Welles' creative integrity shone through in the eyes of his supporters. The struggle to maintain creative freedom against the encroachment of media backlash became emblematic of a larger battle between artistic expression and the corporate influence of media titans. As the conflict escalated, it laid bare a critical tension in Hollywood that challenged the integrity of the film industry, bringing to the forefront the sacrifices made for artistic pursuit in the face of overwhelming adversarial forces.

In summary, the narrative of "Citizen Kane" serves as a testament to the



struggle against censorship and the power of storytelling. It demonstrates how a singular creative vision, in the face of insidious opposition, can risk everything for the sake of truth and free expression.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The importance of artistic integrity and free expression.

Critical Interpretation: When faced with overwhelming resistance and censorship, like Orson Welles during the making of 'Citizen Kane', you are reminded of your own creative pursuits and the value of standing firm in your beliefs. This chapter inspires you to embrace your individuality and to forge ahead with your vision, regardless of external pressures. Just as Welles challenged the powerful forces of Hearst and confronted the media's sway over public perception, you too can draw strength from his courage, empowering you to express your truth and champion your ideas, no matter how daunting the opposition may seem.



Chapter 11 Summary: 11. Negotiating and Placating

In the escalating battle surrounding the film "Citizen Kane," tensions rose as attorney Arnold Weissberger advised Orson Welles about the potential of legal action from William Randolph Hearst. While Weissberger argued that there was no basis for a libel case since Hearst's name, likeness, and actions were not explicitly used in the film, he cautioned that Hearst could employ harassment tactics that could threaten RKO's release of the movie.

Ultimately, despite rumors of a legal injunction, no formal lawsuit was filed, leaving the studio navigating a precarious landscape influenced by Hearst's powerful media empire.

Amidst this turmoil, RKO's internal discussions were fraught with ambivalence regarding Citizen Kane's future. Although Weissberger continued to maintain that the film should assert its independence from Hearst's influence, the studio was divided, with executives weighing the risks of releasing an audacious project against the financial pressures already burdening RKO. The specter of a successful lawsuit hung over them, creating a chilling effect on theater chains considering screening the film. Weissberger's urgent pleas emphasized the necessity for RKO to adopt a firm pro-release stance to protect Welles' creative vision.

While the early months of 1941 saw a strangling silence from RKO in the face of mounting pressure, Weissberger and Welles explored an aggressive



strategy to assert control, even contemplating legal action against RKO for withholding the film. Meanwhile, Welles faced harassment from Hearst's organization, which sought to exploit negative press and influence industry leaders to back away from supporting Citizen Kane.

As the situation intensified, prominent Hollywood figures rallied around Welles, gathering for private screenings that fostered a wave of enthusiasm for the film. In late January, RKO's resolve began to solidify, culminating in an essential meeting where studio executives finally recognized Citizen Kane's merit. Welles passionately defended his creation, and the combined effect of these showings drew attention to the film's artistic significance, significantly shifting the tide of opinion within Hollywood.

Amidst these developments, the maneuverings of Hearst's organization continued, utilizing smear campaigns against Welles and further stoking fear within theater owners about potential repercussions. The various attacks against Welles encompassed accusations of communism, insinuating that his liberal affiliations were grounds for public disapproval. In the face of these defamations, Welles retained a steadfast public image, countering claims while gathering industry support for his film.

Despite RKO's initial indecision, the film's delayed release transformed into a public relations challenge, ultimately leading to promotions that heralded Citizen Kane as a groundbreaking work. However, by March, there remained



no set release date, an issue exacerbated by ongoing pressures from Hearst. This continued postponement frustrated Welles, who felt the urgency to self-advocate by threatening lawsuits if the film was not promptly released.

In an important breakthrough, Welles' powerful backing, along with burgeoning critical acclaim from early screenings, persuaded RKO executives of the film's value, culminating in a firm commitment to its release. Finally, an official premiere date was set, marking a triumphant moment in the film's tumultuous journey from conception to screen, allowing Welles' pioneering vision to overcome the adversities posed by one of America's most influential media magnates.

Thus, the saga of "Citizen Kane" underscores the intersections of creativity, power, and corporate interests, encapsulating a pivotal chapter in cinematic history where artistic integrity clashed with entrenched media influence. The legacy of the film emerged not only as a landmark in filmmaking but also as a testament to the resilience required to navigate and counter pervasive cultural forces.

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Chapter 12: 12. Mr. Hearst

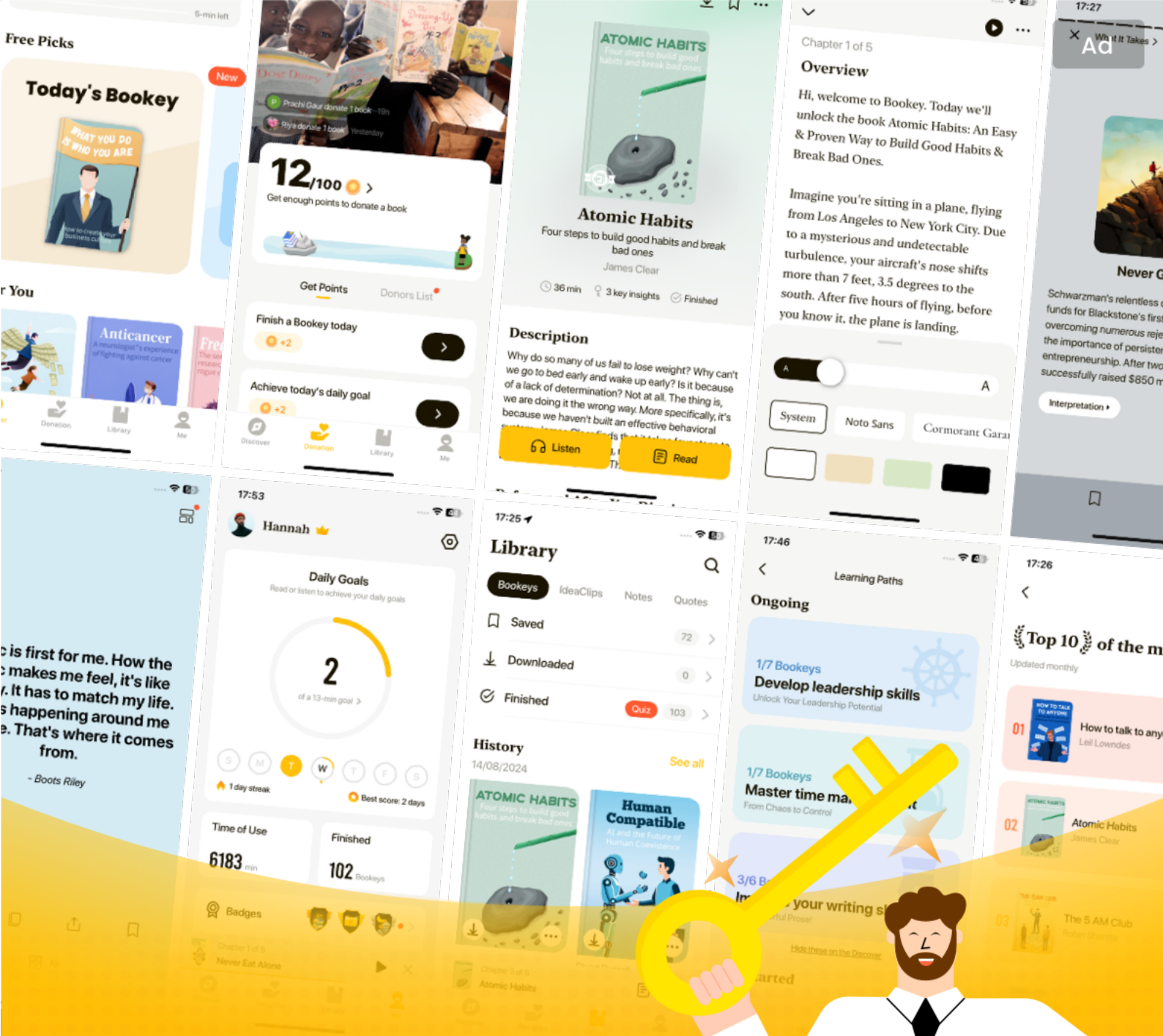
In examining the connections between Charles Foster Kane, the protagonist of "Citizen Kane," and real-life media magnate William Randolph Hearst, we delve into profound thematic contrasts and parallels illuminating the intricacies of power, integrity, and identity in American media.

1. Origins of Wealth: Both Kane and Hearst share a remarkable genesis; their fortunes were birthed from fortuitous discoveries of precious metals—Kane through a gold mine inherited from his mother and Hearst from a significant silver vein. Further, Welles and Kane both experienced their inheritances at a young age, although Welles' distribution was far less substantial than Kane's fictional wealth.

2. Expulsion from Institutions: Their youthful rebellion is mirrored in their academic histories. Hearst was expelled from Harvard for a prank involving chamber pots, while Kane garnered a similar notoriety for his disruptive behavior across multiple schools. This shared expulsion hints at their unyielding pursuit of control and influence.

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Chapter 13 Summary: 13. Release

The release of *Citizen Kane* marked a transformative moment in cinema history, generating intense anticipation that rivaled any major film premiere of the time. Despite the Hearst organization's attempts to suppress the film, their efforts inadvertently amplified interest across the media landscape, creating a surge of demand for press screenings. The film's advance screening on April 9, 1941, attracted 400 reporters and critics, although this press enthusiasm did little to seduce theater owners into showing it.

The initial reluctance of theater chains to screen *Citizen Kane* led to Orson Welles suggesting unconventional venues to maximize visibility, feeling confident that public interest would convert into financial success—an idea encapsulated in his line about making it “the film your local theater won’t let you see.” Eventually, after significant renovations, the film premiered at the Palace Theatre in New York City on May 1, followed closely by openings in Chicago and Los Angeles.

The Los Angeles premiere drew an impressive constellation of Hollywood luminaries, signaling a moment of high prestige within the industry. Rave reviews poured in from critics, praising its groundbreaking techniques and the revitalizing experience it offered to audiences. Notable voices lauded the film's narrative depth and innovative storytelling methods, cementing its status as a cinematic landmark. Critics like Bosley Crowther of *The New



York Times* underscored the film's importance with statements declaring that to suppress such a work would have been a crime.

Nevertheless, despite the critical acclaim, *Citizen Kane* struggled commercially. Although initial ticket sales in New York appeared promising, they dwindled rapidly, ultimately failing to translate into profit. This disappointment was compounded by limited daily screenings, inhibiting the film's box office potential during its initial run. Moreover, an ill-timed promotional strategy coupled with persistent fears regarding Hearst's influence over exhibitors suppressed widespread distribution.

As the film transitioned into broader release, success varied greatly. While urban theaters eventually reported stable business, small-town showings frequently faced disastrous attendance and led to disparaging reviews from theater managers, who considered the material too sophisticated for general audiences. The hesitation of some theater owners to screen the film due to potential backlash reflected the lingering shadow of Hearst's intimidation.

Despite this challenging landscape, *Citizen Kane* received significant recognition during awards season. Nominated for nine Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director for Welles, the film's singular achievement ultimately produced only a single Oscar for Best Original Screenplay—shared with Herman Mankiewicz—leaving its other nominations unfulfilled. This outcome demonstrated both the film's artistic



merit and the stark realities of Hollywood politics.

In the following years, *Citizen Kane* fell into relative obscurity, facing struggles with financial viability amid fluctuating public interest. RKO's leadership change and the marginalization of Welles' creative team further hampered the film's resurgence. Ultimately, while *Citizen Kane* laid the groundwork for innovative cinematic storytelling and left a profound impact on film criticism, its initial release highlighted the complexities of commercial success, artistic ambition, and the shifting landscape of Hollywood recognition.

Years later, *Citizen Kane* would emerge from obscurity as scholars and audiences alike began to appreciate its groundbreaking narrative and technical styles, ensuring its place as a timeless classic in the annals of film history.

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Chapter 14 Summary: 14. Triumph

The journey of "Citizen Kane" from obscurity to acclaim is a remarkable testament to its enduring impact on cinema and culture. Initially released in 1941, the film struggled to find its footing, particularly within the American film landscape, where it failed to achieve significant box office success. The tumultuous period of World War II and the subsequent lack of access meant that it was not until 1946 that "Citizen Kane" was introduced to audiences in France. Here, a wave of influential critics and filmmakers began to recognize the film as a monumental achievement in cinematic artistry. Authorities in French film criticism, such as André Bazin and François Truffaut, praised not only the film's technical prowess but also the extraordinary vision of its young creator, Orson Welles, who was merely 25 at the time of shooting.

1. In France, "Citizen Kane" was lauded as a transformative work that set new standards for storytelling and film as an art form. Noteworthy publications, led by "La Revue du Cinéma," thoroughly examined Welles' direction and the striking cinematography of Gregg Toland, emphasizing the film's relevance as a serious artistic endeavor rather than a commercial product.

2. Conversely, in the United States, the film's status languished amidst the Hollywood studio system's dominance, where films were often treated as mere commodities rather than pieces of art. For over a decade, "Citizen



Kane" faded from view, its prints largely neglected or destroyed. It wasn't until 1956, fifteen years after its original release, that the film was reissued in theaters—an attempt to capitalize on Welles' concurrent Broadway success.

3. Following its re-release, "Citizen Kane" began to regain its esteem. The evolution of film scholarship in America, led by burgeoning academic institutions and museums, saw a renewed academic interest in the film. Television played a paradoxical role in revitalizing classic films; by making them accessible to a new generation, it set the stage for the eventual resurgence of "Citizen Kane."

4. The critical revival was marked by notable recognition in major film polls. By 1962, "Citizen Kane" was voted the greatest film of all time in the influential Sight & Sound poll, a title it has reclaimed multiple times since then, even amidst changing cinematic landscapes. Other accolades followed, placing the film consistently among the top rated in various international and domestic surveys.

5. Orson Welles' vindication extended beyond critical acclaim. The film not only achieved recognition within academic circles but also with the general public over time. In 1989, "Citizen Kane" was designated for preservation by the U.S. Library of Congress, solidifying its status as culturally and historically significant. Popular polls further supported its stature, with



accolades from organizations such as the American Film Institute, which named it the greatest American film in both 1997 and 2007.

Through this trajectory, "Citizen Kane" transformed into the quintessential example of cinematic achievement, lauded by both critics and audiences alike. The film's triumph is not just a story of artistic recognition but also reflects a wider cultural evolution, demonstrating how a film can transcend its time, influence generations of filmmakers, and remain dearly cherished by viewers. In the end, for both Orson Welles and "Citizen Kane," the narrative concluded in victorious acclaim.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The transformation from obscurity to acclaimed recognition serves as a powerful reminder of resilience and vision.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine yourself at the edge of a challenging endeavor, feeling misunderstood or overlooked by those around you. But remember, like 'Citizen Kane,' your unique perspective and passion—though initially unrecognized—hold the potential to reshape the narrative in ways you can't yet foresee. Embrace the journey of creation, knowing that true artistry can take time to be appreciated. In staying committed to your vision, you foster resilience that can inspire not only your own path but resonate with others, encouraging them to embrace their own unique journeys towards recognition and success.



Chapter 15: 15. Walking on the Edge of a Cliff

Orson Welles experienced a remarkable paradox in his career; from initial monumental success with "Citizen Kane" to a series of artistic challenges and failures that spanned nearly forty-five years. Despite receiving limited financial backing, Welles became widely acknowledged for his artistry, eventually earning prestigious accolades such as an honorary Oscar and the Life Achievement Award from the American Film Institute. Welles firmly believed artists must be out of sync with their times to create true art, reflecting his maverick persona.

In his later years, Welles continued to navigate the shifting facets of cinema, even as threats emerged concerning colorization technologies that could alter his seminal work, "Citizen Kane." Just weeks before his death in 1985, he expressed urgent concern to filmmaker Henry Jaglom about the potential colorization of his film by Ted Turner, demonstrating his acute awareness of the industry's evolving landscape. Despite initial plans, the attempt to colorize "Citizen Kane" was halted following legal challenges, asserting the protective measures afforded by Welles' original contract with RKO,

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Chapter 16 Summary: Cast and Production Credits

Chapter 16 of "Citizen Kane" by Harlan Lebo provides a comprehensive overview of the film's cast and production credits, revealing not only the primary actors but also detailing the extensive contributions of bit players, extras, and the intricate behind-the-scenes staff responsible for its creation.

The primary cast features notable names such as Orson Welles, who portrayed the enigmatic Charles Foster Kane, supplemented by actors like Joseph Cotten as Jed Leland, Dorothy Comingore as Susan Alexander, and Agnes Moorehead as Mary Kane. Each actor's role is crucial in weaving the narrative that captures the rise and fall of Kane, a media mogul.

Interestingly, some of the cast members were new to the film industry, representing the Mercury Theatre's ambition and pride in introducing fresh talent. The film credits a young Sonny Bupp as "Kane III," introducing a puzzle regarding the generational names within the Kane family. This quirk highlights the meticulous yet often chaotic nature of the production's scripting process.

In addition to the prominent characters, the narrative outlines a multitude of minor roles and extras, showcasing a vibrant ensemble that includes notable historical figures like Theodore Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler portrayed by actors in pivotal newsreel scenes. These contributions, compiled from meticulous research, further enrich the film's authenticity and immersive

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quality, with the American Film Institute's Catalog serving as a reliable source for filmographic details.

The production credits reveal a well-structured team: Orson Welles directs and co-produces alongside Richard Baer, while the screenplay is a collaborative effort between Welles and Herman J. Mankiewicz. The impressive cinematography by Gregg Toland sets the visual standard, while Bernard Herrmann's music score enhances the emotional resonance of the film. Notably, the choreography and art direction are also significant, with various artists contributing to the aesthetic and atmosphere of the film.

The work involved in "Citizen Kane" is a testament to the collaborative nature of filmmaking, with each participant—from cameramen and editors to makeup artists and sound technicians—playing an integral role in shaping cinematic history. This detailed dissection of the cast and crew not only honors their individual contributions but also emphasizes the film's legacy as a pioneering work of art in American cinema.

Thus, the summary of Chapter 16 encapsulates the dedication and complexity behind "Citizen Kane," presenting a rich tapestry woven from the diverse elements of its cast and exceptional production team. This analysis serves as a valuable reference for understanding the film's monumental impact on storytelling and its innovative approach in the realm of film history.

Aspect	Details
Primary Cast	Orson Welles as Charles Foster Kane, Joseph Cotten as Jed Leland, Dorothy Comingore as Susan Alexander, Agnes Moorehead as Mary Kane, Sonny Bupp as Kane III.
Minor Roles	Extras included portrayals of historical figures like Theodore Roosevelt and Adolf Hitler.
Production Team	Directed and co-produced by Orson Welles and Richard Baer. Screenplay by Welles and Herman J. Mankiewicz.
Cinematography	By Gregg Toland.
Music Score	Composed by Bernard Herrmann.
Art Direction	Involved various artists for the film's aesthetic and atmosphere.
Filmmaking Collaboration	Every participant (cameramen, editors, etc.) played an integral role in the film's creation.
Film Legacy	"Citizen Kane" is recognized as a pioneering work in American cinema, highlighting innovative storytelling.

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