

To Kill A Mockingbird: Publicity Stills

Definition: "A photograph taken by the unit photographer before, during, or after the shooting of a film for the purpose of advertising, publicity, and display in movie theaters"¹

A Brief History of Movie Stills²

Movie stills (photos) have been issued by studios since the earliest days of cinema. They were sent in limited numbers direct from the studio's publicity department to theaters and the media to promote a new release and the film's stars. The photos had very short printing runs, and became in essence "limited edition" prints.

Most movie stills show a movie scene, but also feature stunning portrait shots and fascinating

candids. Studios recognized the great promotional value of these stills to entice moviegoers

into the theater, and often spared no expense in creating beautiful scene stills, portraits and candids taken by some of Hollywood's most accomplished photographers. Many stills are works of art in themselves, and have become iconic images of cinema and 20th Century culture.

Since the late '60s stills have taken their place along movie posters and lobby cards as desirable and highly collectible cinema artifacts.

Here are a number of stills I have collected from various sources. Some are actual Universal publicity photos (bearing a number in the lower left or right hand corner); others are stills taken from the film itself.

Using some of the key questions of media literacy, a teacher might have her students consider each photograph by asking:

- what is the purpose of each photo?; how might each be used?
- why was each framed in this manner? could it have been framed differently?
- is anything important left out of the frame?
- what does each photo say about the setting or character ?
- what do the clothes they're wearing communicate?
(social status, occupation)
- what can you glean from their expressions?
(happy, sad, fearful, loving, hateful, reflective, worried, frustrated, neutral)

Click on a link below, which will open a separate window of photos:

[Atticus](#)

[Atticus & Scout](#)

[Atticus with Jem & Scout](#)

[Scout](#)

[Jem](#)

[Scout & Jem](#)

[Atticus In Court](#)

[Other Courtroom Shots](#)

[Miscellaneous](#)

Suggested Resources

NEW [Compare TKAM publicity still with lobby card](#)

[Motion Picture Still Archive](#)

[Discovering How Images Communicate](#)

[The Power of the Camera](#)

[Understanding How Still Images Make Meaning](#)

1 Publicity & Advertising

<http://library.thinkquest.org/10015/data/info/reference/exhibition/publicity.html>

2 http://www.autographsmovieposters.com/Stooges_original_vintage_photos.htm