"Yours for the Asking" is one of those films so prolific in the 30's about a likeable hoodlum trying to break into society; it allowed for romance and comedy to be substituted for violence, but still permitted the star to retain his backwoods persona, so that the fans got what they wanted. It was a formula that served Clark Gable and Robert Rockwell well, until his character was wisely kept away from Bogart. Raft went over the well-trodden ground more than once too. Here the gangland melodrama is limited to the first reel, not only getting the film off to a good start, but presumably providing useful come-on fodder for the trailer! It is a formula picture, no more than a time-killer, but these days the sheer expertise of the machinery and the pleasure of a cast full of old favorites, is more than enough of an excuse to trot it out for viewing...especially since the Paramounts are one block of film not controlled by Turner, and their accessibility grows increasingly harder! Ida Lupino and Reginald Owen make a particularly engaging pair of scoundrels, and the script's attempt to eventually turn them into nominal villains does not really work.

--- Ten Minute Intermission ---

EIGHT GIRLS IN A BOAT (Paramount 1935, rel. 1934) Directed by Richard Wallace; screenplay by Lewis Foster and Casey Robinson, from an original story by Helmut Breslau; Camera, Gilbert Warrenton; music by Arthur Rehnb and Harold Lewis, lyrics by Sam Coslow; 85 mins; NY premiere: Paramount Theatres in Times Square and Brooklyn.

With: Dorothy Wilson (Christa Storm); Douglass Montgomery (David Perrin); Kay Johnson (Hanna); Barbara Barondess (Fickies); Walter Connelly (Mr. Storm); Paul von Tabor; James Bush (Paul Lang); Colin Campbell (Smallman); Margaret Marquis (Elizabeth); Marjorie Cavalier (Bobby); Virginia Hall (Mary); Kay Hammond (Katsa) and Joan Woodbury, Irving Bacon, Frank Reicher, Arnold Korff, Ely McAlon.

When the NY Times gave this film a deserved very good review, it seemed to suggest that Hollywood was trying to make a film comparable to the German "Maedchen in Uniform", and did not see at all aware that this film was in fact a very close remake of a 1922 German film of the same title, directed by Eric Waschneck. Although it is clearly set in Europe, the European locale is not emphasised, unf labour, and American audiences must have been a trifle confused by it, particularly its declaratively and rigorously disciplined girls school, which seems to predict the methods and philosophies of the Hitler Youth movement. Made at the end of the pre-code period, it softens the original a trifle, and eliminates the grim sequence in which the unwed mother-to-be plans an abortion, but is scared by the surgery's appearance and changes her mind. Unwed motherhood (witness also 1934's "Dr. Monica") was still regarded by Hollywood as an embarrassment rather than a moral crime, but a year later its attitude changed and even a pregnancy would require the heroine (witness Kay Francis in 1936's "Give Me Your Heart") to spend the whole film in guilt-ridden self-flagellating denunciations of how wrong she had been! Thanks very largely to the sensitive playing of that much under-rated actress Dorothy Wilson (who incidentally married Lewis Foster, one of the film's scenarists), "Eight Girls in a Boat" works pretty much on the same level as the German original, quite transcending the actors and it makes it palatable. Officially was Richard Wallace, a talented but non-prolific director, who made this film between the Celman and Hepburn vehicles, "The Masquerader" and "The Little Minister" respectively. The film contains many direct echoes from the German original, notably a remarkable and near-surreal nightmare scene, and many specific camera compositions and angles, together with some of same acting styles. Officially the original film was never released here because of Paramount's purchase of the rights (with whom waschneck knew "name" at the art houses) but I do seem to recall a possibly pirated and independently released print running in the 42nd Street environs in 1950 (and a very beat-up print at that, indicating it had been around for some time) under the title "The Scarlet Sin". Because of the rights problem, the film has never appeared on tv, and the only extant 16mm print, made directly from the released print, has been damaged and is therefore virtually useless. The part of Barbara Barondess, who plays one of the key support roles, and who will be on hand tonight to help introduce the film. (Because of deterioration in the preservation 35mm, there are some sound problems which I will outline in the opening segments). --- William K. Everson ---