

## LIGHTNING OVER WATER



LIGHTNING OVER WATER is a film about the last months in the life of American director Nicholas Ray, who is probably best known for his cult film "Rebel Without a Cause". Wenders and Ray got to know each other on the set of "The American Friend" and became friends. "Lightning Over Water" was made in just a few weeks at a time when Wenders was free from his studio film HAMMETT.

"Nick told me about his cancer. He knew he was terminally ill. He wanted to die working. Our collective film was an attempt to counter the cancer with something, a form of terminal care, which also resulted in a film. But all of us who made this last journey together with Nick would also have done this without film in the camera," says Wenders.

For the first time, Wenders and Ray also used video for filming. (Ray had already experimented with all possible filming techniques in "We Can't Go Home Again".) "But it was devastating to see how much more merciless and, in the end, more truthful these ugly and shaky VHS images showed the truth as opposed to our well-lit 35mm shots."

The film finishes after Nick's death. A Chinese junk sails on the Hudson river towards the open sea. On board is an urn with Nick's ashes and an old Moviola with wafting film strips. Below deck, the film crew says goodbye to Nick. In the tradition of an Irish wake, stories about the deceased are being told and everybody gets drunk.

# LIGHTNING OVER WATER

The Federal Republic of Germany 1979/80

## FESTIVALS & AWARDS

1981 German Film Award in Silver (Production)

## FORMAT

Length:  
90 min, 2452 m

Format:  
35mm Eastmancolor; 1:1.66

Original Language:  
English

4K DCP (4K Restoration 2023)  
4K restored version supported by funding from  
The Film Foundation and Förderprogramm Filmerbe

## CREDITS

Production:  
Road Movies Filmproduktion GmbH (Berlin), Wim  
Wenders Produktion (Berlin)

Directors:  
Nicholas Ray, Wim Wenders

Producers:  
Pierre Cottrell, Chris Sievernich

Screenplay:  
Nicholas Ray, Wim Wenders

Directors of Photography:  
Ed Lachman, Mitch Dubin, Timothy Ray

Editors:  
Peter Przygodda, Wim Wenders

Sound:  
Martin Müller, Maryte Kavaliauskas, Gary Steele,  
Lee Orloff

### Cast:

Nicholas Ray, Wim Wenders, Ronee Blakley, Susan  
Ray, Tom Farrell, Gerry Bammann, Pierre Cottrell,  
Stephan Czapsky, Mitch Dubin, Pat Kirck, Ed Lachman,  
Martin Müller, Craig Nelson, Timothy Ray, Martin  
Schäfer, Chris Sievernich

### Music:

Ronee Blakley

### Assistant Editors:

Barbara von Weitershausen, Danny Fisher

### Video:

Tom Farrell

### Light:

Stefan Czapsky, Craig Nelson

### Narrator:

Wim Wenders

### Assistant Director:

Pat Kirck

### Executive Producer:

Renée Gundelach

### Production Manager:

Chris Sievernich, Laurie Frank, Jonathan Becker

### Production Assistants:

Becky Johnston, Tom Kaufmann, Sara Nelson,  
Birgit Lelek, John Brooks

### Film Accountant:

Cid Milhado

### In Cooperation with:

Viking Film (Stockholm)

### Primary Distribution:

Skylight Filmverleih GmbH (West Berlin)

### Premiere (DE):

01.11.1980, Hof Filmfestival

### First Release (DE):

15.02.1987, ARD

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