



## The Hollywood Book of Death: The Bizarre, Often Sordid, Passings of More than 125 American Movie and TV Idols

*James Robert Parish*

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Discover the tantalizing details of Hollywood's famous and infamous fatalities

The death of a celebrity is often as fascinating as--and sometimes more fascinating than--a star's actual life. From the grisly end of Sharon Tate at the hands of the Manson family and the mysterious demise of Bob Crane to the peaceful passings of Lucille Ball and George Burns, "The Hollywood Book of Death" is a captivating and appealingly packaged volume of more than 125 television and movie stars' final curtain calls.

Arranged by manner of death, these well-researched accounts include details of celebrities' colorful lives and unusual deaths, their funerals, and the intriguing aftermath. With more than 100 rare photographs and a special "necrology" index of more than 6,000 stars and directors, along with a section revealing where Hollywood personalities are resting in eternal sleep, this enthralling reference promises to be on every film and television buff's "Top 10" gift list.

## **The Hollywood Book of Death: The Bizarre, Often Sordid, Passings of More than 125 American Movie and TV Idols Details**

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## **From Reader Review The Hollywood Book of Death: The Bizarre, Often Sordid, Passings of More than 125 American Movie and TV Idols for online ebook**

### **Erin says**

As you should all know by now, I'm a morbid person. I like reading about death and I enjoy watching things about death. So naturally when I came across this book on the clearance shelf at B&N I had to buy it.

No really I had to, it was \$2.

The Hollywood Book of Death by James Robert Parish is a book filled with interesting facts and tidbits about not only the deaths of famous and less famous stars but about their lives. Obviously this book covers the infamous deaths of Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, Tupac, and Grace Kelly but it also included stars I either had never heard of or knew very little about like the suicide death of Clara Blandick better known for her iconic role of Auntie Em in The Wizard of Oz.

The Hollywood Book of Death is a "fun" coffee table book that you can read as I did at your leisure. An added bonus: The back of the book includes an Appendix with a list of burial sites of the famous.

2018 Popsugar Reading Challenge: A book about death or grief.

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### **Mickey Beerens says**

90% of the people in this book were dead long before my time and 5% of the people I've never heard of....Pass.

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### **Rama says**

A good guide for the Hollywood tour

If you are planning to visit Hollywood and would like learn about a movie star including how they died and where they are buried, then you would love this book. This is not a morbid book detailing the tragic end of a person, but guides movie fans by giving a brief and useful bio of the stars, and the address of the house where the star lived, and the cemetery information. I have visited gravesite of several stars discussed in this book and paid my respect. This book describes stars whose death was strange, brutal, suspicious or natural, and the appendix and the cemetery info given at the end of the book comes in very handy. Much of the information given in this book is already discussed on television, books or many websites related to Tinsel town, but it is nice to have a copy of the book for immediate reference.

Of many stars discussed in this book, I found Janet Gaynor's bio was interesting. Her death due to complications arising from a car accident in San Francisco, and her burial in Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Hollywood was helpful in relating to the movies she did. Other interesting bios I read included Grace Kelly,

Carole Lombard, Jayne Mansfield, Will Rogers, and Ernie Kovacs; all of whom died in auto/plane accidents. Will Rogers was buried initially at a Los Angeles cemetery but later moved to Claremont, OK.

The celebrities who succumbed to alcohol and drug intoxication included; John Barrymore, Montgomery Clift, W.C. Fields, Judy Garland, William Holden, Veronica Lake, Barbara La Marr and Bel Lugosi. Some of the roles John Barrymore played were as an alcoholic, for example, in the movie "Dinner at Eight," his role reflected his true life. Bela Lugosi was strongly addicted to controlled substances that significantly affected his health, and poor choices he made in his career drove him to poor house. His last wish was that he was to be buried in his Dracula trademark black cape and tuxedo suite. For a small gathering attending the services, it was an eerie feeling to open the casket and see Dracula in the coffin. The story has it that the hearse left the mortuary parking lot, after driver lost control of the vehicle, and drove itself along the busy Hollywood Blvd and turned at Vine Street, the regular walking path of Lugosi.

A friend, after seeing W.C. Fields reading Bible, asked him why he chose to read the holy book, the comic quipped, "Looking for loopholes." Ramon Navarro, Sharon Tate, Rebecca Schaeffer, Haing Ngor (academy award winner for "The Killing Fields,") and Sal Mineo were murdered. The homicides of Tate and Navarro were especially brutal.

The deaths of Susan Hayward, John Wayne, Agnes Moorhead and Dick Powell occurred naturally. But many reporters believe that they were exposed to radiation that hovered over Utah filming site for the movie "The Conqueror." All of them developed cancer after the movie was shot in 1955.

The deaths of actor George Reeves, Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood, and Bob Crane were perplexing. Much has been written on them and various theories still exist. Recently LAPD reopened the investigation of Natalie Wood's death. George Reeves death was attributed to suicide by LAPD, but some believe that his one time lover Toni Mannix hired a hit man to do the job. She had a motive; his last will and testament read that most of his assets were to go for Mannix and not his fiancée Lenore Lemmon. Clara Blandick, Dorothy Dandridge, Peg Entwistle, Carole Landis, George Sanders, and Lupe Velez committed suicide for either health or economic reasons. Peg Entwistle fell from the Hollywood sign (from letter H) 100 feet below. It has been rumored that this area is haunted by Peg (woman in white) who is restless and never found peace in her life. There is a picture of the suicide scene of Carol Landis in the book, where she is found lying in her house in a crouching position. Landis was in serious financial position and the actor Rex Harrison was the last to see her before her unfortunate decision to end her life on July 4 weekend of 1948.

The book reads wonderfully and many stories I found in this book are well researched

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### **Elaine says**

The Hollywood Book of Death

The bizarre, often sordid passings of more than 125 American Movie & TV Stars

By: James Robert Parish

For full disclosure. I am a "celebrity" buff. I take gray pride in knowing about the stars of today and yesteryear. Mr. Parish's "The Hollywood Book of Death"

(The bizarre, often sordid passings of more than 125 American Movie & TV Stars) filled my head with many stars unknown to me as well as the stories of their deaths.

Mr. Parish provides a detailed synopsis on each person life and death. I was fascinated to learn of Florence Lawrence "The BIOGRAPH Girl" as well as the world's first movie star in the chapter on Obscurity.

I was also fascinated with Wallace Reid, Ernie Kovacs and The Wizard of Oz's Auntie Em, Clara Blandick.

In the Introduction, Mr. Parish points out that while the stars are on the top of their game, every tidbit about them is published. As they begin to fall off the radar, obscurity sets in, until their "final" day, when they are suddenly worthy of stories in newspapers, a retrospective of their career on Entertainment Tonight and a few more days of being newsworthy. For many of them, perhaps it's their idea of Heaven.

I liked the way Parish broke up the chapters: Accidental, Drugs & Alcohol, obscurity, murder, suicide, natural causes, & puzzling.

This book spoke the facts and left the gossip out. Written with dignity. 5 STARS

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### **Lori says**

I would give this book a 3.5. I was a bit unsure of what this book would be like. The title makes it sound like it would be something from one of those "rag sheets" Actually it was not that bad. It basically writes of famous stars and how they died. It was put in categories. Such as Natural causes, murders, suicides and mysterious deaths. This book is from about 15 years ago so does not include recent deaths. This was kind of interesting. I was relieved that it was not leaning on the rag sheet side. It just wrote small biographies of the star's life and how they died. I was surprised to be finished with the "death parts" A big portion of the book just lists tons of stars and the years they were born and died. There was also a chapter on the hundreds of cemeteries they were buried. I was afraid by the title this would actually be "sordid" and did not want to read a book like that. but this was not so bad.

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### **Nora says**

Gift from my boss - not even kidding

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### **Dee brown says**

I enjoyed reading this. Although, I think a few "facts" aren't facts. It contains stars from the very beginning of cinematography up almost present day.

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### **Kristin says**

This morbid book had been sitting on my shelves for years. In a pre-Christmas cleanout, I decided to get rid

of it, but first I wanted to skim through and read about the celebrities I was interested in. (That's all I ever planned on doing anyway: skimming. I'm not interested in reading about people who I don't even know of.) So I did. And it was informative, but not particularly well written, and very depressing. I know, not surprising. I'm reading about how people died, aren't I?

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### **Ambyr says**

This book was a pretty nice and lazy read. The title is a little misleading, though, in that it makes the reader think they are on the verge of reading about some of the most dramatic tales of life and death in Hollywood. Spoiler alert: This just isn't so. While many of the deaths were fascinating, most were average at best. I don't even want to begin delving into the psychological implications of my dissatisfaction with the nature of the loss of actual human lives, but I spent the majority of the book waiting for it to get juicier. Thinking that is one thing, actually saying it out loud and realizing how insane it sounds is another. Surely I can't be alone in this.

I will give the author this: He was *insanely* detailed. Every page was full to the brim with accurate information, however not so much that you completely lose interest. The information given has a steady flow and helps the reader build the celebrity persona in their mind, which was especially helpful for me considering I wasn't familiar with 95% of the people featured. The author's attention to detail and ability to structure information that would usually be bland and boring in an interesting manner was the sole reason I gave this book three stars instead of two. I would be lying, however, if I said I didn't find myself skipping over some of the more mundane information to find out how the person met their maker. Once again, I might have to do some soul-searching to determine what that says about me as a person.

Overall this book is exactly as I described it above: A nice and lazy read. When I purchased this it was on sale in the kindle store and I thought it looked too interesting to pass up. While I enjoyed passing the time with it, I doubt I will ever pick it up to read again.

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### **Sarah - All The Book Blog Names Are Taken says**

Eh. Ok. Full review to come.

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<http://allthebookblognamesaretaken.bl...>

[www.facebook.com/AllTheBookBlogNamesA...](http://www.facebook.com/AllTheBookBlogNamesA...)

[www.twitter.com/SarahsBookNook](http://www.twitter.com/SarahsBookNook)

Rating: 2.5 Stars

I mean, eh. It was okay, but this is not the kind of book you read straight through, even though that is what I did. It's a sort of reference book with information about a variety of stars and how they passed away, divided

by sections into murders, suicides, etc. In addition, for several of the stars, the author gives at least paragraphs-worth and sometimes pages-worth of information on the star's rise and fall. For quite a bit into the book I did not recognize any of the celebrities mentioned, save Jayne Mansfield and James Dean. And to be honest, I only know who Mansfield is to begin with because her daughter plays one of my most favorite television characters ever, the amazing Mariska Hargitay. An interesting fact about Mansfield's death (that I knew prior to this book) was that Hargitay and her brothers were in the backseat of the car when the accident occurred and none were seriously injured.

I went through a phase in college of being completely obsessed with celebrity gossip. This was when Paris Hilton, Nicole Richie, and Lindsay Lohan were at their height. Oh how we begged they would go away, even while devouring every article we could about them. If only we had known that those three would give way to the Kardashian juggernaut. Ah, simpler times. Anyway, seeing as how I still have some residual affection left over for celebs, especially those of the golden days of Hollywoodland, I was most interested in the book to begin with. It's morbid, that is for sure, but by nature I think we are all fascinated by death on some level and the death of celebrities is equally as intriguing because given their time in the spot light, we feel like we know them.

There were a lot of people I was interested in to read about and I learned some interesting tidbits that I did not know before, such as that Judy Garland tried to kill herself so many times before she died of an overdose, or that Marilyn Monroe's phone records from the day she died mysteriously disappeared.

The Phil Hartman bit was especially sad to me. He was one of my favorite SNL cast members and I loved NewsRadio. When he was murdered, it absolutely devastating to me. I was 15 at the time and watched the news cycles endlessly, as they replayed the stories over and over. I remember feeling so awful for their children, who were so young, and also because of the fact that they had been in the home at the time of their father's murder.

I can't even begin to discuss Farley's death. That was another one that hit me hard, as another cast member from what are arguably SNL's best years since Belushi, Murray, Ackroyd, etc.

There was a large section of text devoted to River Phoenix and I feel like until reading this book to jog my memory, I had completely forgotten that Joaquin and River are brothers. I was only ten when River died and I never really knew what the Viper Room was at that age, but I had watched Stand By Me by that time (I was a mature ten year old).

As I neared the end of the text (at 59%) I could not help but notice the absence of a couple young actors who I had liked as a youth and as an adult - Heath Ledger, Paul Walker, Jonathan Brandis and Brad Renfro, to name a few. Ledger's death hit me especially hard because he was so impossibly talented, he had a young daughter; it was all just too awful. I did not realize this book had been published in 2001, and that is the problem with books like this - they are hopelessly and forever out of date. So many celebrities have died since 2001, the book would easily be doubled in length to include new content. But it would also be in need of an update pretty much every year, and that is why I typically shy away from books of this kind.

The additional information in the appendixes offers a list of notable movie and tv stars who had passed away up to 2001 and those marked with an asterisk were included in the book (appendix A) and then a list of cemeteries where notables are interred (appendix B). The bibliography contained some interesting books I would like to read, mostly biographies I would like to read to gain a bit more in-depth knowledge of certain stars.

While this was interesting, I would definitely say do not buy it. As mentioned above, it is hopelessly out of date and that alone makes it not such a great investment. Luckily I snagged it via BookBub for I think \$ .99, so it was not so bad.

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### **Rhiannon Dillon says**

Not as macabre as the title suggests, I enjoyed this book because I loved reading all the potted histories of past Hollywood stars. It does feel a bit ghoulish at times but it is fascinating - like reading my favourite podcast 'You must remember this'.

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### **Matthew says**

That was **dark**.

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### **Marley says**

Quick read A good book for airport reading. Parish has collected a of short live and dead bios of Hollywood celebs, though I'm not sure some of his information is correct. (Also note that this was published in 2001 so it lacks updated material on some murder/suicides). I was glad to see some silent screen stars, and happy to see that the forgotten Carole Landis was included. My mother, who could be full of surprises and never struck me as a movie star follower) used to rant that Rex Harrison was responsible for Landis 'death. For the adoption inclined, I was horrified to learn that Michael Landon and his first wife adopted twins and later re-homed one. Yuk!

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### **Ralph Wark says**

#### **A good bathroom book...**

Meaning you can read about the death of Hollywood stars a bit at a time. Brief and sometimes interesting stories about how stars died, although rarely above the detail level of Wikipedia. There are some interesting anecdotes, but overall it's OK. One note, 35% of the book are lists of all Hollywood deaths, where they're buried, and references, so it's a much quicker read than it appears.

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### **Kristen says**

Too much retelling of the celebrities' lives before discussing their deaths. A little back story is necessary, but Parish just went on and on. The tagline claims the book is about "bizarre, often sordid" passings, but that's misleading. Chapter five is a long, boring recounting of natural deaths.

Celebrity history buffs will likely enjoy this, but I did not.

