

Helen Marketti's Music Corner

Tragic Hollywood

By: Helen Marketti



The Golden Age of Hollywood, with a long history of alluring spotlights, red carpets and famous names on movie marquees set the tone for many with silver screen dreams. Movie stars as early as the 1920s were turning heads of the public as everyone craned their necks for a better look at the newest sensation as giant flashbulbs popped, autograph books flung forward and the long line to the box office wrapped around several city blocks. What few may have realized is that there was a human being attached to the "name" and many of those names have fallen from their pedestals with tragic and sad endings.

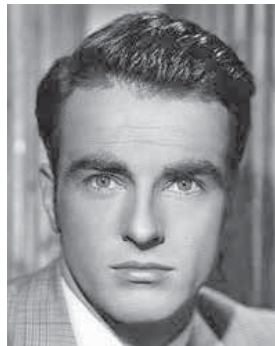
Jackie Ganiy's new book, *Tragic Hollywood: Beautiful, Glamorous, Dead* (2013) takes the reader on a journey through the darker side of Hollywood with names we know well and names that perhaps we have never heard of as we travel through tinsel town with many heartbreaking stops along the way. A book filled with fascinating stories of how dreams turned quickly into gold and then was lost just as fast. It is a book that is difficult to put down once you start turning the pages and learn more about Hollywood's darker history.

"When I was a kid, there weren't many TV stations so I watched a lot of old movies," recalls Jackie. "I remember watching *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Birds* and *The Twilight Zone*. My parents were avid moviegoers and took me to see many films. I remember watching a double feature at the drive-in, which was showing *Catch 22* and *Patton*. They were very heavy hitting films. I also saw *The Graduate* when I was around

seven years old and *The Godfather* when I was ten. I grew up always being drawn to the darker side and preferred those kinds of movies instead of watching cartoons."

Jackie has always been interested in the ole days of Hollywood and found herself fascinated with the lives of the tortured souls who met an early demise that she decided to start a Facebook page, which is the same title as her book. The page is followed by over 22,000 fans, which shows that many of us like to learn more about the more somber side of our Hollywood favorites. "I think we look at stars and wonder why many of them do not seem happy. They have everything that we do not or so it seems. It makes you wonder," said Jackie. "Let's face it, it's more interesting because when there is scandal going on, it creates conflict and conflict is more interesting. There is a little bit of envy in all of us. We don't want to see how great someone else's life is, we tend to run away from it. We perk up when a celebrity has been arrested for drunk driving."

Jackie's book is filled with stories, anecdotes and photos of more than forty celebrities who took a turn into eternity. "I tried to include obscure people that perhaps not everybody is aware. I wanted to include different stages of Hollywood. It would make the book boring if I told the same stories about the same people that everyone has already heard. I wanted to sprinkle the book with the lesser known of Hollywood and give an opportunity for their stories to be told."



Montgomery Clift



Suzan Ball



Barbara Payton

Suzan Ball was the cousin to the famous comedy redhead, Lucille Ball. Suzan starred in a few movies during the early 50s, falling head over heels in love with the older actor, Anthony Quinn that eventually ended as most Hollywood affairs. Suzan was only in her early 20s when it was discovered that she had cancer in her leg and it would have to be amputated. At this time, she had a relationship with Richard Long (*Big Valley*) and the two were soon married. Unfortunately, the cancer had returned and Suzan died at the age of 21 in 1955.

Barbara Payton is another tragic story of Hollywood gone wrong. Barbara began her career as a bombshell beauty, appearing in movies with James Cagney and Gary Cooper. After a series of "B" movies, poor management, failed marriages and personal problems, Barbara found herself in the streets of Hollywood. The place that once welcomed her now tossed her aside and she struggled to survive. In her later years, she was overweight and alone on the Sunset Strip. At the age of 39, her career was over and she turned to the bottle for comfort which is how she passed away.

Montgomery Clift was leading man handsome and good friends with Elizabeth Taylor when in 1956 he was involved in a serious car accident while leaving her home after visiting with her and her husband. The impact caused disfigurement to his face and even after he healed and returned to the movies, he was never the same again, physically or emotionally. People are fickle with their Hollywood loves and flocked to theatres to catch a glimpse of how Clift looked in films "before and after". The fragile actor began to spiral downward further. He was having difficulty finding movie roles in spite of the best attempts by Elizabeth Taylor to help save his career. He was found in his New York apartment in 1966. He died of a massive coronary at only the age of 45. Years of self-destruction had finally caught up with him.

There are more stories in Jackie's book about Hollywood's well known and the lesser known.

Jackie's book, *Tragic Hollywood, Beautiful, Glamorous, Dead* is available at Amazon.com

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