



Hollywood Babylon II

Kenneth Anger

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Hollywood Babylon was originally published in Paris, and quickly became an underground legend. Not a word has been changed. Not a story omitted. Here is the hot, luscious plum of sizzling scandal that continues to shock the world.

Hollywood Babylon II Details

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From Reader Review Hollywood Babylon II for online ebook

Paul Savage says

Mr Anger is back to trawl through Hollywood for gossip, death (including a lengthy section, pre-Wikipedia, on Hollywood suicides), and gangster connections - ending with an impassioned attack on then-president Ronnie Reagan... good stuff.

Sean Kottke says

The sequel to my 2013 naughty cruise read for my 2014 cruise :) More of the best in Old Hollywood gossip, in Anger's inimitable style. The concluding chapter on Ronald Reagan is a fittingly sobering end to the trajectory of the two volumes' tales. That should be required reading for anyone nostalgic for the political icons of the 1980s. Sadly, the tragic "Chords of Fame" have continued to play on for far too many in and out of Hollywood in subsequent years, despite the cautionary tales of their forebears.

Chriss says

Obsession, sex, all the chemical dependencies ever thought of in the place you expect them to be...Hollywood. It seemed to be somewhat of a voyeuristic look into the dreams and ambitions of vibrant people who fall into these seedy alley nightmares of Hollywood Babylon. Even though it does not glamorize Hollywood in the least, I wanted to see that the people that are idolized in society so much are just as troubled, maybe even more than everyone else. It was good reading for those who like a little disgust in their Hollywood news!

Good Books Good Friends says

Plutôt un 2,5. J'ai eu l'impression que Kenneth Anger raclait les fonds de tiroir pour trouver de nouvelles anecdotes. Et sur le dernier tiers, consacré aux suicides, on dirait parfois une rubrique nécrologique avec 2 lignes de texte, parfois une photo, et la date de la mort... Cela-dit, il y a quand même quelques petites histoires savoureuses et beaucoup de photos.

David says

I picked it up as it was in my parents books that I was not allowed to read. Really just a catty finger pointing exercise of people Kenneth liked and didn't. No real history or depth.

Luke Devenish says

This was a book I used to stealthily pick up and thumb through back in the 80s when it could be found in 'cult' bookstores, all shiny and new. Poverty struck as I was then, I never actually BOUGHT it, or indeed, READ it. I just gasped at the pictures - and there were plenty to gasp at. Now that the subject of Old Hollywood is truly obsessing me, I finally purchased a copy. Time hasn't been kind. Kenneth Anger was a trail blazer in the 60s with his bitter brand of celebrity reportage - Perez Hilton owes a debt to him - but the truth is that Anger's photo library is the best thing about this book, his sequel to the original bestseller. The pictures promise SO much in 'Hollywood Babylon II' - a promise I had clung to since the 80s - but the text doesn't quite deliver. The most tantalising snapshots, with their accompanying barbed captions, suggest gob-smacking tales of disillusion and tragedy. But in too many cases this is all we get: suggestion. Too few of the photographs are backed up with any actual story. What text that is provided at least starts out terrifically with the chapters on killer Paul Kelly, the Pantages frame up, and Joe Kennedy's disgusting skulduggery - all of which are fascinatingly sordid tales I confess I knew nothing about. But after that, much of the book is devoted to a catalogue of celebrity suicides. To call this depressing reading barely touches the sides. It was here I realised that Anger loathes his subjects. There's no humanity to this section. There isn't even any humour. He celebrates the self-destruction of people whose only crimes, truth be told, was that they possessed the aspiration to make something of themselves, however deluded that might have made them. Several of these stories I had encountered before in other books. Charles Boyer's tragic end, when I first read of it in Jeanne Basinger's 'The Star Machine', left me near tears, frankly. He was an actor I've always loved and I had no idea of how life had played out for him. None of that for 'Hollywood Babylon II'. I guess I've moved on. I can appreciate Old Hollywood camp as much as the next man, but I've come to love these people and their legacy too much to share Anger's callousness.

Ivy says

Hollywood Babylon II (or HollyBaby II, as the author calls it) was a great way to while away the hours I spent waiting to fly out of O'Hare airport last weekend. Although it's structured as a series of gossip vignettes about various personages sprinkled throughout Hollywood history, certain celebrities pop up repeatedly in different places to tie the whole random, rambling history together. It was perhaps a little less thrilling than the first one--presumably because Anger had already used up all the superstar gossip. On that same token, in HollyBaby II Anger was able to get past the most well-known, oft-repeated stories of Hollywood's famously debauched residents and delve into the shady and under-the-radar goings-on of Tinseltown's supporting cast. I really appreciated, for example, the extended coverage of the seedy life of that Kennedy clan patriarch and wannabe film producer, the sinister Joseph Kennedy. Anger's in-depth knowledge, catty cynicism and gallows humor make this book and its predecessor both addictive guilty pleasures.

Armin says

27/100

Das zweite Buch besteht zu 25% aus Wiederholungen aus dem ersten Teil, wirklich neu ist das Gejammer über das heruntergekommenen verkockte Hollywood der 1980er und männliche Stars, die nach zu viel Schnee keinen mehr hochkriegen. Ja, früher war alles stilvoller und die Stars natürlich schöner. Ein humpelnder Nachklapp zu ersten Teil.

Tosh says

What makes the subject matter of old Hollywood is not the subject itself, but how Kenneth Anger tells the tales. Are they true? Is this history? Are they made up? Maybe a combination of all above, but who cares? It's Kenneth Anger's "Hollywood Babylon" and in a sense it is a life-blood to an art form and culture that he loves and hates.

Without a doubt, Anger is probably the greatest living American filmmaker alive. It's film history filtered through his sensibility via his film work and the Hollywood Babylon series.

Vol 1 is the masterpiece, and vol.2 sort of picks up the missing pieces - but both are essential for the personal film library.

Rama says

The troubled lives of film stars during golden era

Kenneth Anger is a well-known author who wrote the best seller "Hollywood Babylon," and revealed many interesting stories about the stars of the pre-code era. This book is a second volume with the same title and fills in the material not covered in the first book and additional info about less-known stars. The author was an insider who worked in Hollywood as a child-star and got to know many well-known personalities in movie business. His stories are reliable and they have been quoted in many articles in Wikipedia, blogs and books on the history of Hollywood.

Alexander Pantages came from Athens, Greece and made fortune during Klondike gold strike and owned vaudeville houses and about 60 theaters. He was worth \$30 million in 1929 when the rest of the country was in economic turmoil. But his sexual assault on a young Eunice Pringle, a school dropout and would-be dancer dethroned him as the commander-in-chief of movie theaters. Later on her deathbed, Eunice confessed that it was a frame set by Joe Kennedy, bootlegger to the film colony and head of FBO pictures who wanted to destroy Pantages theater circuit. Joe also had eyes for beautiful females in Hollywood that led to a sensual relationship with actress Gloria Swanson. While shooting the movie "Swamp," which later became "Queen Kelly," Gloria Swanson was so incensed with the antics of erratic and kinky director, Eric von Stroheim, she asked Kennedy to stop the "lunatic in charge of the film."

William (Billy) Haines was the first MGM star to face the ordeal of a microphone with Lionel Barrymore in 1928 film "Jimmy Valentine." He was a well-known gay and had loved his ex-stand-in Jimmy Shields. Howard Strickland, the head of the publicity at MGM and studio head Luis B Mayer had to make sure that all MGM movies are box office hits at Loew's theaters. The challenging job was to make sure that studio stars conformed to a strict image of morality is highest. Undesirable romances were discouraged, gay life style was unacceptable, and abortions arranged in Tijuana. When MGM found out that William Haines, an upcoming star of the studio was gay, studio started rumors that he was in love with actress Pola Negri and they were getting married. Things got from bad to worse as Haines was arrested in gay sex scandal at downtown Los Angeles YMCA when the house dick and vice squad appeared at his door and arrested him promptly. Later, the Klan assaulted Haines and Shields when they were coming out of a party at El Porto

beach in Los Angeles. Mayer fired the “fagelah” instantly. He later became an interior decorator and worked to decorate actress Carole Lombard’s house and they became good friends. She was so sure of his “gayness,” she would strip naked and dress in front of him; he reported that often times she did not wear bras or panties. Years later when her husband Clark Gable, irked with his wife being “palsy” with mainly males, asked “don’t you have any girlfriends,” she said “yes, Mitch Leisen and Billy Haines.”

In 1939 when George Cukor was replaced by Victor Fleming to direct the epic film, “Gone with the wind,” it was widely reported that the “macho” Gable did not like to work with the gay director because of his dislike for that lifestyle. But the truth is that Cukor knew something about Gable that no one else knew except for Billy Haines. It turned out that when Clark Gable was still a bit player at MGM, he had let himself blow-serviced by Haines and seek his help to further his career at MGM. Haines, a close friend of Cukor was not “lip-lazy,” when he confided Gable’s secret. George Cukor knew that Gable was not “He-Man” after all.

In “Roman Scandals” made for Goldwyn in 1933, director Busby Berkley (Buzz), the undisputed genius of the Hollywood musical shot a scene with completely nude women who were wearing long chains and blonde wigs which fell down to their snatches. At the height of his success tragedy struck in 1935. Buzz was returning home after a party at production manager William Koenig’s house. He had one too many drinks at the party and while driving at Pacific Coast Highway near Santa Monica Canyon, he lost control and careened off into the oncoming traffic which resulted in three deaths. He was charged for second degree murder. He was found not guilty.

In 1938 Buzz was sued by Irving Wheeler for seeking the affections of Irving’s wife, actress Carol Landis, and the suit was dismissed. But Landis was widely known at the Fox studio as the “available” girl in the backroom of Darryl Zanuck’s office. He was known to have a regular female companion for “fun” every working day at about 4 PM. After Buzz’ mom passed away he lost control of his senses and hit the bottle hard. He spent six weeks at a psychiatric ward in Los Angeles. He was reduced to rubbles physically and emotionally. He weighed about 107 pounds and his bank balance was \$650.

Jimmy Dean was reclusive, compulsively withdrawn, promiscuous, friendless, suspicious, boorish and rude. On occasion, he would be charming and on occasions, he would be annoyingly nuts. On the eve of his death, he had attended a gay party in Malibu, and his gay friends accused him of dating women for publicity purposes.

Actor John Bowers who lost all his money when he invested in a failed flying school, he became penniless and depressed. Later he intentionally drowned in Pacific Ocean and his body recovered from the Malibu Beach in California. His death was retold in the movie “A Star is born,” starring Frederick March and Janet Gaynor. Screen writer of the movie took this story and put into the movie. In this movie, the character played by March simply walks into the Pacific Ocean in Malibu and never returns. In the last chapter entitled, “The magic of self-murder” the author has a given brief account of several Hollywood’s notable who committed suicides. This includes actor George Sanders, Jack Dougherty, husband of Barbara La Marr, Lupe Velez, Jonathan Hale, Gig Young and his young wife Kim Schmidt’s double suicide, Mae West’s lover John Indrisano, actress Peg Entwistle, Charles Boyer, Clara Blandick, Alan Ladd, Chester Morris, Inger Stevens, Margaret Sullivan, and others.

The book has plenty of rare and hard to find pictures that need to be treasured. The pictures of Joan Crawford is racy. The book is very well written and reads effortlessly. I highly recommend this to anyone interested in the history of Hollywood, especially the golden era.

Philippe Malzieu says

Perhaps Anger need money. I did not see the interest to write a suite to Hollywood Babylone. I found this concentrate of gossip boring. Curiously, here, the choice of each history clarifies the brittleness of these artists. It is better than than I feared. But it is not upsetting.

If you do not have anything to read on the beach...

Heather says

A lesson in when an author is so emboldened and delusional as to believe he doesn't need an editor. Dull, long-winded, and irrelevant tangents galore. Would have been more effective at half the length. BUT, there is still some juicyness and wicked photos.

Iris says

Better than the first "Hollywood Babylon" because the stories are much more reflective. Anger writes longer and more page-turning articles here, perhaps because he's writing about scandals that are not quite as well-known as those from the first book. However, caveat lector: this is still a compendium of gossip and and there are a couple of horribly gory photos.

Jason Coffman says

Meh. After the excellent first book, this one comes off as a less interesting cash-in. Anger even re-tells some stories he mentioned or told in detail in the first book! There's still a lot of great information and awesome photos, but the meat of the book is considerably weaker than the original Holly Baby.

Kit says

Tacky as hell but so fun; still want a copy.
