

Drunk in Hollywood (The Research Damn Near Killed Me) © — an intimate memoir by Nancy Bacon

PREFACE

I arrived in Hollywood in the late 50s, just as the golden era of movies was fading into the sunset and the Age of Aquarius was dawning on a new horizon. I was 16 years old and thought I was 10 feet tall and bulletproof. I was immediately embraced into the inner circle of Hollywood's most glamorous A-list of stars: Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Barbara Stanwyck, Orson Welles, Victor Mature, William Holden, Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, John Wayne, Glenn Ford, Robert Mitchum, Errol Flynn, Laurence Harvey, Eddie Fisher, Judy Garland, Hedy Lamarr, Dean Martin — all of whom had a serious drinking problem. I know, because I got drunk on many occasions with all of them. I was involved in intimate love affairs with some of them, and close friendships with others. I saw them up close and personal, warts and all, at their most dazzling best and their most pathetic worst.

When the 60s exploded like a dizzying skyrocket, I was there at ground zero: the Sexual Revolution and the birth of The Pill, Women's Lib, the Civil Rights Movement, Viet Nam, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and both Kennedys. I had known Jack casually since 1959 and was having a sexual fling with Bobby when he was gunned down.

I tried my hand at a series of jobs while trying to decide my life's career; jumping out of cakes at anniversary, graduation, birthday and bachelor parties; being a showgirl in Las Vegas; training large reptiles and wild animals such as wolves and bears, but mostly big cats; nude modeling; editing several girlie and gossip magazines, columnist, etc.

In my travels I encountered a galaxy of superstars and had affairs or friendships with the likes of Hugh O'Brian, Tommy and Dick Smothers, Rory Calhoun, Yvonne DeCarlo, Gardner McKay, Conway Twitty, Regis Philbin, Joey Bishop, Vince Edwards, Barbara Payton, Sammy Davis Jr., Paul Newman, Henry Miller, Leslie Nielsen, Omar Shariff, Warren Beatty, Tuesday Weld, Mickey Rooney, Mamie Van Doren, Don Wilson, Glen Campbell and Rod Taylor.

I was casually dating Jay Sebring when he was butchered by Charlie Manson's band of crazed followers at Sharon Tate and Roman Polanski's canyon mansion. I was a freelance magazine writer at the time, so I set out to "get the story" by visiting Spahn Movie Ranch where the murderers resided in squalor. I was the only one to interview Tex Watson (the lone male among four knife-wielding hippie chicks) before he escaped to Texas.

I've had drinks and fascinating conversations with Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon. I had a private audience with Pope Paul in The Vatican in Rome. Every spectacular, splendid adventure I ever experienced, involved alcohol in one form or another. Friends and lovers were more appealing seen through a rosy haze. I was just a kid and my eyes were filled with stars, so I blindly followed those brilliant, extraordinary, larger-than-life drunks right down to the bottom of the bottle.

"Drunk In Hollywood" © covers the volatile 60s — and the 50s and early 70s — and I had a front row seat.

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Interested publishers may contact me through my website, NancyBacon.com