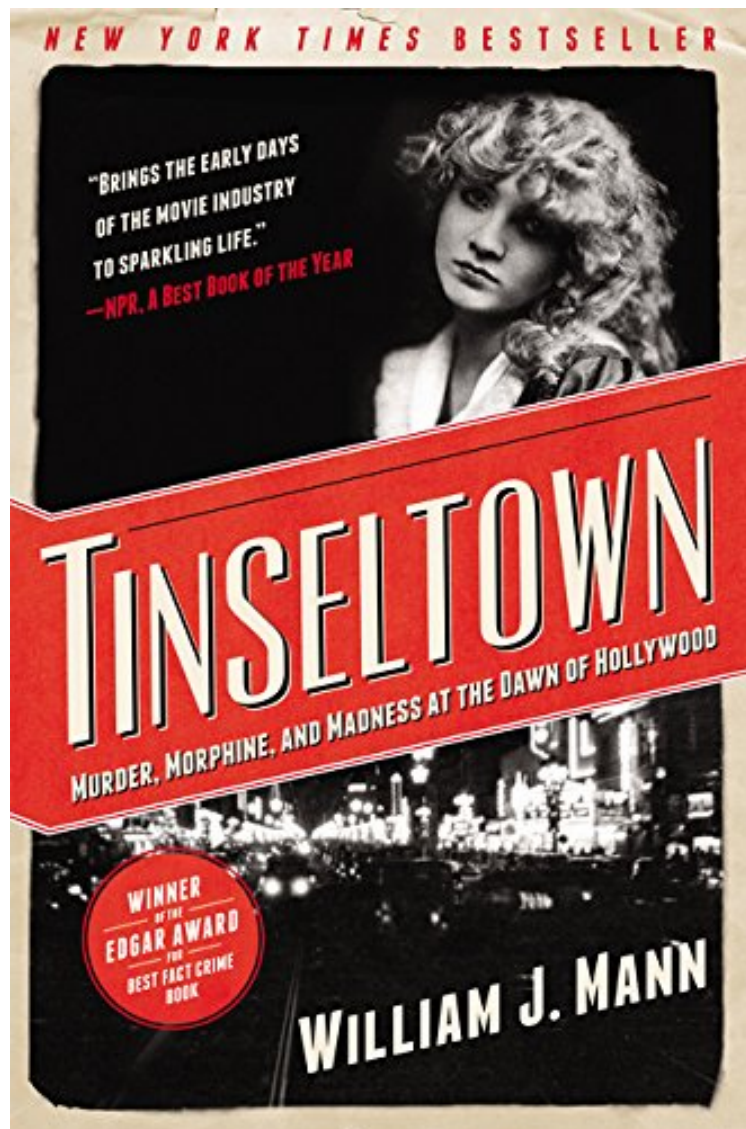


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Tinseltown: Murder, Morphine, and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood

William J. Mann

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#33887 in Books Mann William J 2015-10-06 2015-10-06 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .84 x 5.311, .0 #File Name: 0062242199528 pages Tinseltown Murder Morphine and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood | File size: 25.Mb

William J. Mann : Tinseltown: Murder, Morphine, and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tinseltown: Murder, Morphine, and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood:

82 of 86 people found the following review helpful. Hollywood murder mystery By wogan William J. Mann writes a

detailed investigation concerning all who were near or implicated in the murder of William Desmond Taylor president of the Motion Picture Directors Association. One good point in his favor is that he does not make up dialogue. He uses reports of what was actually said. His details and telling uses much minutia - giving the background and character of the many people that surrounded Taylor. At places the story jumps, he will tell about an incident, but not fully and then go on with the narrative and the character's background and habits and then jump back to what the exact subject was in the first place. The riddles of the case are slowly unraveled and the crime, in the end "is solved" by a dying woman's confession. Other than that there is still no real evidence. We also learn something about the early film industry, especially the rivalry between Adolph Zukor and Marcus Loew. The morality of much of Hollywood during these years of the new motion picture industry is explained. This is a book that has much detail and description of many relatively unknown Hollywood personalities. Those who want to learn about the new motion picture industry in 1920 and a crime that was huge news, but forgotten in later years might enjoy reading this book.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Greed, sex, and bad behavior trump murder, morphine, and madness? By RSRSM. My favorite actress used to be Bette Davis. Although I don't follow films to the same extent these days, I'm still fascinated by the idea of Hollywood and how the film industry evolved. To me, that's the best part of "Tinseltown." Considering the book's subtitle - Murder, Morphine, and Madness at the Dawn of Hollywood - I'd just as soon do away with the murder aspect and focus on how Hollywood developed the way it did. Mann does that to a certain extent, and that part of the book was highly enjoyable. But I could have done without William Desmond Taylor and the mystery of who murdered him.

Fascinating aspects of the book:

1. Competition between producers (Adolph Zukor) and theatre owners (Marcus Loew) to determine who would dominate.
2. Actresses acting up - even (or especially?) in the 1920s. Plenty of booze, drugs, and bad behavior. Extramarital sex? Tut, Tut!
3. The morality police - outraged "church ladies" trying to tone down what passed in those days for R- and X-rated movies. Imagine what they'd have to say about today's films. Since this was the era of Prohibition, however, I suppose a certain amount of outrage was inevitable.
4. Anti-trust concerns in the land of eternal sun.
5. Fatty Arbuckle's trials and tribulations.

Lots of fascinating folks in this book. William Desmond Taylor himself wasn't developed enough to be one of them.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. I couldn't walk away from it !!! By Frank. I couldn't walk away from it !!! A true-crime story very skilfully told in novel form. If like me you are a fan of factual stories about "Old Hollywood" and a whodunit then buy this book. Mr. Mann certainly did his homework. So much was going on in Hollywood at the time. Drugs, Drinking, Reformers, Greed, ambition, the birth of an industry and the problems created by those taking these things to extreme. Also by those who felt they were above it all. Mann used all of this to skillfully craft a portrait of the time. A most colorful backdrop for the story. Bravo! It's not just another mediocre Hollywood word fest that in the end leaves the reader shaking their head skeptically. I was consumed and completely drawn in. I had to know all that the author came to realize. I was not disappointed. All details throughout are completely dealt with and wrapped up in the end. No stone left un-turned and no story line left hanging. An unsolved murder is intriguing. This one hung out there for a long time. Perhaps partially solved. I now believe we know all we are ever going to know thanks to William Mann. I'm looking forward to the flicker :) ..

New York Times Bestseller Edgar Award winner for Best Fact Crime The Day of the Locust meets The Devil in the White City and Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil in this juicy, untold Hollywood story: an addictive true tale of ambition, scandal, intrigue, murder, and the creation of the modern film industry. By 1920, the movies had suddenly become America's new favorite pastime, and one of the nation's largest industries. Never before had a medium possessed such power to influence. Yet Hollywood's glittering ascendancy was threatened by a string of headline-grabbing tragedies—including the murder of William Desmond Taylor, the popular president of the Motion Picture Directors Association, a legendary crime that has remained unsolved until now. In a fiendishly involving narrative, bestselling Hollywood chronicler William J. Mann draws on a rich host of sources, including recently released FBI files, to unpack the story of the enigmatic Taylor and the diverse cast that surrounded him—including three beautiful, ambitious actresses; a grasping stage mother; a devoted valet; and a gang of two-bit thugs, any of whom might have fired the fatal bullet. And overseeing this entire landscape of intrigue was Adolph Zukor, the brilliant and ruthless founder of Paramount, locked in a struggle for control of the industry and desperate to conceal the truth about the crime. Along the way, Mann brings to life Los Angeles in the Roaring Twenties: a sparkling yet schizophrenic town filled with party girls, drug dealers, religious zealots, newly-minted legends and starlets already past their prime—a dangerous place where the powerful could still run afoul of the desperate. A true story recreated with the suspense of a novel, Tinseltown is the work of a storyteller at the peak of his powers—and the solution to a crime that has stumped detectives and historians for nearly a century.

“Mann tells his story expertly . . . When it's all over, Mann has argued so ably for his killer-candidate that he finally may have put this controversy to rest.” (Washington Post) “Mann's call sheet of colorful characters is so richly painted, they not only make the Roaring '20s come to life, they're so bizarre they seem like they could only exist in a movie.” (Entertainment Weekly) “Mann's got the goods . . . Tinseltown may well be the most completist murder mystery of all

time.” (Choire Sicha, BookForum)“Sex! Drama! Scandal! If you have the slightest curiosity about the dark purple scars of Hollywood history, this is the go-to book you cannot miss. . . Epic and fabulous—every page is haunting, every chapter a film noir. I was up all night.” (Rex Reed)“William Mann fires on all cylinders in this fascinating real-life crime story that has stumped film fans since 1922. A page-turner with incredible research and prose double-boiled, Tinseltown is a whodunit tour de force, revealing the dark heart of Hollywood.” (Patrick McGilligan, author of *Alfred Hitchcock: A Life in Darkness and Light*)“Massive, exhaustively researched, endlessly fascinating . . . It’s a gripping ride with innumerable twists and turns and scenarios . . . If you love a good mystery and vintage Hollywood lore—which doesn’t read much differently than current Hollywood lore—I recommend Tinseltown without reservation.” (Liz Smith)“A stellar and gripping true-crime narrative . . . An engrossing and comprehensive look at the birth of the motion picture industry and the highs and lows it faced in the early 1920s . . . Mann has crafted what is likely to be a true-crime classic.” (Publishers Weekly (starred review))“Mann spins this yarn with all the suspense and intrigue of a Dashiell Hammett novel. From beginning to end, the engrossing true tale will keep you guessing.” (Out Magazine)“The book’s power derives not just from piecing together the clues and analyzing motives; Los Angeles is very present as well.” (Publishers Weekly)“A gripping true-crime story that encompasses a colorful period in film history . . . Mann seamlessly weaves the details of the murder investigation, witnesses and newspaper accounts into the rich history of early film . . . Mann masterfully captures the zeitgeist of Hollywood in its early days.” (Kirkus s (starred review))“[A] gripping true-crime narrative. . . . Mann expertly juggles the various threads of the narrative to a satisfying conclusion that is sure to please both true-crime and film-history enthusiasts.” (Booklist)“For folks interested in true crime and the heyday of Hollywood, this book is a match made in a rather sinister version of heaven.” (Living Read Girl)“[Mann] brings the early days of the movie industry to sparkling life on the page, whether he’s evoking Los Angeles’ demimonde or explaining how the era’s scandals drove the film industry toward protectionism in the face of morality campaigns.” (NPR, *The Best Books of 2014*)“Tinseltown is an immensely enjoyable read as a recreation of a murder, and a fascinating time [and] place.” (McClatchy News Service)“A gripping true-crime narrative. . . . Mann expertly juggles the various threads of the narrative to a satisfying conclusion that is sure to please both true-crime and film-history enthusiasts.” (Booklist)“If you love a good mystery and vintage Hollywood lore—which doesn’t read much differently than current Hollywood lore—I recommend Tinseltown without reservation.” (Liz Smith)A lucid solution to the crime that feels almost as airtight as the final chapter of an Agatha Christie mystery.” (Connecticut Post)“The book is so evocatively written, right down to the weather, characters’ glances, and what they are feeling, . . . [and] seductively cinematic . . . should be made into a film itself.” (Daily Beast)Tinseltown is entertaining enough to feel illicit, but its reporting makes it an essential addition to any respectable bookshelf of L.A. history.” (Los Angeles Times Book)“Author William J. Mann paints a striking portrait of Los Angeles in the Roaring Twenties—a sparkling yet schizophrenic town filled with party girls, drug dealers, religious zealots, newly-minted legends and starlets already past their prime; a dangerous place where the powerful could still run afoul of the desperate.” (TCM.com)“Tinseltown does a fine job of parceling out its complex plot, and its author brings early Hollywood to life with the flair of a popular historian.” (Wall Street Journal)“Mann spins this yarn with all the suspense and intrigue of a Dashiell Hammett novel. From beginning to end, the engrossing true tale will keep you guessing.” (Out Magazine)From the Back CoverIn the early 1920s, Hollywood was threatened by a string of scandals—including the murder of the handsome, secretly haunted actor and director William Desmond Taylor, a crime that went unsolved for nearly a century. Now, in this fiendishly involving New York Times bestseller—hailed as “a must-read” by Liz Smith—William Mann draws on a rich host of sources, many untapped for decades, to revisit the case of the enigmatic Taylor and the diverse cast that surrounded him—including three loyal ingenues, a devoted valet, a gang of two-bit thugs, and moguls Adolph Zukor and Marcus Loew, locked in a struggle for control of the exploding industry. Along the way, Mann brings to life Los Angeles in the Roaring Twenties: a town filled with celebrities, party girls, and drug dealers—a dangerous place where the powerful could still run afoul of the desperate.About the AuthorWilliam J. Mann is the New York Times bestselling author of *Kate: The Woman Who Was Hepburn*; *How to Be a Movie Star: Elizabeth Taylor in Hollywood*; *Hello, Gorgeous: Becoming Barbra Streisand*; and *Wisecracker: The Life and Times of William Haines*, winner of the Lambda Literary Award. He divides his time between Connecticut and Cape Cod.