

The Enigma of Eddie Mannix: Old Hollywood's Notorious Fixer



In the glitzy realm of Old Hollywood, where stars shone bright on the silver screen, there existed a shadowy figure who operated behind the scenes, shaping narratives and burying scandals beneath layers of secrecy. His name was Eddie Mannix, a man whose very existence blurred the lines between myth and reality. Here, we delve into the murky depths of Mannix's world, uncovering the alleged crimes he orchestrated and the enigmatic persona he cultivated.

Eddie Mannix emerged as a pivotal figure in the golden age of Hollywood, wielding influence that extended far beyond the studio lots. Born in 1891, Mannix's early career in the film industry saw him ascend the ranks, eventually landing a position at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), one of the most powerful studios of its time. As the head of MGM's general manager's office, Mannix became known as the studio's "fixer," a title that masked his role as a manipulator of truth and master of deception.

Mannix's primary function was to protect the image of MGM's stars, shielding them from scandal and controversy that could tarnish their carefully crafted personas. From extramarital affairs to substance abuse, Mannix employed an arsenal of tactics to keep unsavoury details out of the public eye. In the words of biographer E.J. Fleming, Mannix was "the supreme orchestrator of cover-ups, the smooth operator who could make the impossible happen."

His first marriage, to Bernice Fitzmaurice in 1916, endured despite Mannix's extramarital affairs, a reality they grappled with due to their adherence to Catholicism. However, their union crumbled when Bernice filed for divorce in late 1937, accusing Mannix of physical abuse and citing his infidelity. Tragically, before the divorce proceedings could commence, Bernice met her demise in a car accident outside Palm Springs, California on November 18, 1937.

Following Bernice's passing, Mannix began living with actress and Ziegfeld Follies dancer Toni Lanier, with whom he had been romantically involved. They married in May 1951, and remained so until Mannix's death in 1963.

Mannix's involvement in the demise of actor George Reeves, renowned for portraying Superman in the series "Adventures of Superman," stirred suspicion. Reeves had engaged in an affair with Mannix's wife, Toni, starting in 1951. Astonishingly, Mannix purportedly condoned the liaison, which became common knowledge within Hollywood circles. Concurrently, Mannix maintained a prolonged extramarital relationship with a Japanese woman.



Despite their Catholic beliefs, which eschewed divorce, Mannix and his wife continued their unconventional arrangement for several years. However, when Reeves terminated the affair and became engaged to socialite Leonore Lemmon in early 1959, Toni was devastated. Reeves' demise on June 16, 1959, (after a number of car accidents) from a gunshot wound to the head at his residence, sparked speculation. Although officially deemed a suicide, controversy enveloped the ruling, fuelled by rumours implicating Mannix. Whispers insinuated that Mannix, allegedly linked to organized crime, orchestrated Reeves' demise through a hired assassin.

The biography "Hollywood Kryptonite," penned by Kashner and Schoenberger, presented a partially fictionalised account suggesting that Toni Lanier Mannix, leveraging her husband's purported criminal ties, orchestrated Reeves' demise.

One of the most infamous incidents allegedly orchestrated by Mannix involved the death of Thelma Todd, a popular actress whose mysterious demise in 1935 sent shockwaves through Hollywood. Todd was found dead in her car, with speculation swirling about foul play. Despite the suspicious circumstances surrounding her death, Mannix reportedly worked to suppress any damaging information that could implicate powerful figures within the industry.

One of Mannix's most intricate cover-ups remains shrouded in the annals of Old Hollywood history: the orchestrated adoption of Loretta Young's biological child, concealed for over six decades. The clandestine saga unfolds amidst the backdrop of Young's clandestine affair with her married co-star, Clark Gable, during the filming of "The Call of the Wild" in 1935. Their liaison led to Young's pregnancy, a scandalous predicament in an era where unwed motherhood was taboo.

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Mannix, the master manipulator, orchestrated a meticulously choreographed charade to shield Young from the repercussions of her pregnancy. Young vanished from the public eye, purportedly embarking on a journey across Europe, effectively eluding prying eyes for 19 months. Upon her return, Young unveiled a narrative of adoption, asserting that she had welcomed an orphaned child into her life.

This elaborate façade endured for decades, carefully guarded from the prying eyes of the press and public alike. It wasn't until Young's daughter, Judy Lewis, reached the age of 23 that the truth unfurled. Young, burdened by the weight of deception, finally revealed the truth about Judy's birth, unravelling the tangled web of lies spun by Mannix decades prior.

Despite his formidable reputation as a fixer, Mannix remained an elusive and enigmatic figure. Rarely granting interviews and shrouded in layers of mystery, he cultivated an aura of power and intimidation that permeated throughout Hollywood. Actor George Clooney, who portrayed Mannix in the film "Hail, Caesar!" aptly described him as "the scariest guy in Hollywood."

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