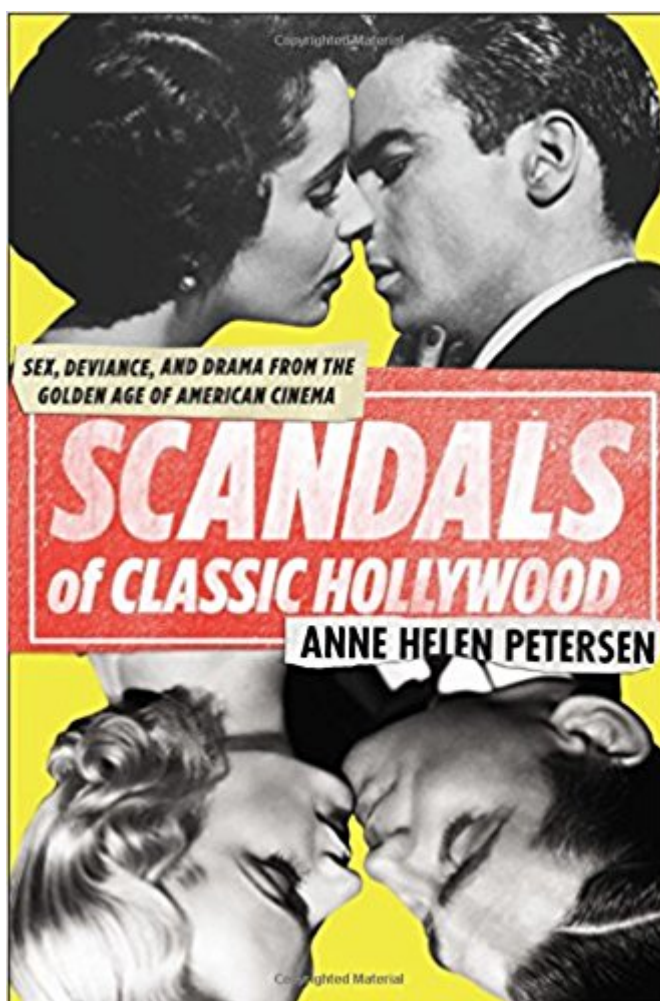


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# Scandals Of Classic Hollywood: Sex, Deviance, And Drama From The Golden Age Of American Cinema



## Synopsis

Gossip meets history – a compulsively readable collection of Hollywood’s most notorious clashes and controversies in the spirit of Hollywood Babylon. Believe it or not, America’s fascination with celebrity culture was thriving well before the days of TMZ, Perez Hilton, Charlie Sheen’s breakdown and allegations against Woody Allen. And the stars of yesteryear? They weren’t always the saints that we make them out to be. BuzzFeed columnist Anne Helen Petersen is here to set the record straight with *Scandals of Classic Hollywood*. Pulling little-known gems from the archives of film history, Petersen reveals eyebrow-raising information, including: The smear campaign against the original It Girl, Clara Bow, started by her best friend; The heartbreaking story of Montgomery Clift’s rapid rise to fame, the car accident that destroyed his face, and the “long suicide” that followed; Fatty Arbuckle’s descent from Hollywood royalty, fueled by allegations of a boozy orgy turned violent assault; Why Mae West was arrested and jailed for “indecent charges” And much more. Part biography, part cultural history, these stories cover the stuff that films are made of: love, sex, drugs, illegitimate children, illicit affairs, and botched cover-ups. But it’s not all just tawdry gossip in the pages of this book. The stories are all contextualized within the boundaries of film, cultural, political, and gender history, making for a read that will inform as it entertains. Based on Petersen’s popular column on the Hairpin, but featuring 100% new content, *Scandals of Classic Hollywood* is sensationalism made smart.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Engaging” Petersen is an author for our age. • The Boston Globe “Insightful.” • “Clear and convincing” Although Petersen’s book benefits from intelligent analysis of archival research, she writes with the verve of an enthusiast. • LA Times “Terrific and thoughtful and fascinating.” • NPR’s Pop Culture Happy Hour “Smart, relevant, and fun” think TMZ with a PhD. • Bitch “Compulsively readable.” • The Rumpus “Compulsively readable” [Petersen] sheds light on often-repeated myths with impeccable research and razor-sharp analysis. • Yahoo! “[This] dishy book delivers the juicy anecdotes readers crave.” • NY Post “Dishy as hell.” • Refinery29 “Not merely a rehash of salacious old Hollywood gossip, Petersen revivifies flattened images of Hollywood icons” Wide-ranging and surprisingly thoughtful. • Kirkus “Brisk and lively.” • Library Journal

Anne Helen Petersen received her Ph.D. in media studies from the University of Texas, where she studied the industrial history of the gossip industry. After teaching in the university setting for several years, she transitioned to full-time feature writing, most recently with BuzzFeed. Her work has appeared in The Believer, The Awl, The Hairpin, Lapham’s Quarterly, The Baffler, Pacific Standard, The Guardian, Los Angeles Review of Books, and Virginia Quarterly Review.

An interesting analytical look at the "scandals" of earlier Hollywood, none of which by today's scandals really amounted to much. The cover seems to promise more than the manuscript offers. If you're looking for some lurid material this definitely is not for you. You could give this book to Grandma for Christmas and she wouldn't be offended by its contents.

The title is a bit of a misnomer. What Peterson does here, and beautifully, is look at the image making machine of a bygone era. She's very savvy and as a longtime Garland fan I didn't expect to learn much new. And did I? One very telling thing. Every one is aware that Garland's diet was strictly supervised by the studio, but I had assumed this was information that was confidential at the time it occurred. I did not realize that her dieting struggles were so public, and that this information was passed out by the studio. Peterson understands the gossip industry as if she were on the inside, and as a result gave me a new perspective on an old perception. Also, Peterson doesn't play

around with the facts. Where there is doubt about something, she doesn't hedge about the fact. She doesn't claim to know everything, and is therefore a lot more trustworthy than those who do. Plus, she's very respectful of those she writes about. Salacious scandal? You won't find much here. A very insightful look at how stars of a past era were marketed and sold, and how this affected their psyches? It's on every page.

This book was a lot of fun, but I can't say that I learned much that I didn't already know. I've always enjoyed social history, and that includes tales of Hollywood so most of this book was old news. I also felt that there were details that were left out on many of these actors and actresses. For someone who has less knowledge, it is certainly worth a read. It's entertaining and even somewhat titillating.

Well written but I hate to say that I did not learn much new information that I have not read before.

Petersen's joy for her subject shines through on every page; it feels like a gossip session at a slumber party. This is a warm, witty look at some of the greats. She manages to be affectionate and generous throughout, too: this is friendly gossip that's never malicious, flavored with sociological analysis and full of insight. The book is mostly new material; even those who have read her column on The Hairpin will find something they like here.

This is a powerful, intelligent, wise, informative book describing the cultural history of Hollywood and of the US, in the mirror during the 40 and 50s. The best book of its kind. Don't be put off by the title. This well written book goes deep and teaches you about events and people that you could not get close to in perhaps any other way. I gave it to all my adult children, who are in the biz, for Christmas. Thank you Ms Petersen for your masterpiece!

Interesting as a companion to the podcast, "You must remember this."

I am a huge fan of this feature on The Hairpin and in general of Anne Helen Petersen's academic work on celebrity. There was some really fascinating content in here. I'm not even a huge classic movie fan but am so fascinated at the machinations of the studios and how they built and tore down personas. I found myself doing more research on these fascinating figures. That said, it was kind of a dry read and had some repetitive phrases. I may sound like an idiot for saying

this, but I wish it had pictures (I'm spoiled on the blog posts). All and all I enjoyed it and hope this is the first of many books to come by this author.

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