



**DYLAN FROST**

**SHOCKING  
CELEBRITY  
DEATHS  
AND  
MURDERS  
VOLUME 2**



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Dylan Frost

# **Shocking Celebrity Deaths and Murders Volume 2**

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## **AUTHOR'S NOTE**

A list of references used in the research for this book can be found at the conclusion of the final entry. Though there is dark material in this book I have strived to be sensitive and tactful in writing about the various (and often tragic) cases we will encounter. I have written crime and celebrity books before and hope that my experience in such matters makes this an interesting and balanced read.

## **AL ADAMSON**

Al Adamson was born on July the 25th, 1929, in Hollywood, California. He was a writer/producer/director of cheap but cheerful exploitation films in the 1960s and 1970s. He was responsible for strange cultish obscurities like Psycho A Go-Go (later worked into Blood of Ghastly Horror), Satan's Sadists, Horror of the Blood Monsters, Dracula Vs. Frankenstein (which was clearly ahead of its time given that films like Freddy Vs. Jason and Alien v Predator came decades later!), and Five Bloody Graves.

Adamson's film career was a long way from mainstream Hollywood and strictly bargain basement but he was never short of a few marketing gimmicks. His 1978 film Death Dimension (a.k.a. Freeze Bomb) featured no less than two former James Bond franchise stars in George Lazenby and Harold Sakata. Adamson also directed two kung fu films featuring Enter the Dragon star Jim Kelly. Adamson's 1983 film Lost featured the last ever performance by Sandra Dee.

The grade Z drive-in pictures of Adamson featured biker chicks, gore, nudity, and low-budget fun for those with a sweet tooth for trashy tongue-in-cheek schlock, car chases, explosions, action, kung fu, and horror. Adamson was described by some as something akin to a modern day Ed Wood. Sometimes he would even get the rights to an existing picture (like a western for example) and throw in a load of new scenes chock full of gore and sex. Adamson was never going to win an Oscar but he was inventive and very hard-working and his films were entertaining enough taken on their own terms. He also made uncredited appearances in many of his movies.

Adamson even filmed some of his movies at the ranch where the Charlie Manson cult lived. He also made some softcore erotic films in the 1970s to make ends meet and bring in some extra cash. You could probably describe Adamson as a grindhouse legend of sorts. The decline of the drive-in market probably affected Adamson's stock-in-trade and by the 1990s he was more or less retired. By now he was in his sixties and divided his time between his homes in California and Nevada. Adamson wasn't super rich but he had a modest nest egg and two homes so he wasn't doing too badly all things considered.

Somewhat vulnerable and lonely from the recent death of his wife (and frequent leading lady) Regina Carro, Adamson became friendly with a 50-year-old builder named Fred Fulford. Fulford became a live in contractor helping out with renovations at the house Adamson had in California. Though he had no way of knowing it, Adamson's decision to hire Fulford as a contractor would cost him his life. Fulford would be responsible for Adamson's macabre death - the director meeting a fate rather akin to a character in one of his films.

Adamson was by all accounts an affable and decent person and didn't deserve what fate had in store for him.

In 1995, Adamson was reported missing by his brother and friends after they didn't see him for weeks. This was all very suspicious and unusual as far as they were concerned. It was very out of character for Al to suddenly go away without telling anyone. His brother felt sure that Al wouldn't have gone on a vacation or trip without informing him first so he naturally became worried. The chief suspect in Al's disappearance was obviously going to be a certain Fred Fulford. Fulford had spent a lot of time with Al lately and

more or less lived at the house. If anyone knew what had happened to Al it was surely going to be Fred Fulford.

When it transpired that Fulford had gone away too this case suddenly became even more suspicious. Eventually it was decided to search Al's home for signs of any clues that might potentially explain what had happened to him and why he had apparently vanished without trace. It was during this search that a grisly and tragic discovery was made. The 66 year-old Adamson was found dead and buried in cement where a jacuzzi had been. No prizes for guessing who the prime suspect in this case was now. It was probably not going to take a genius lawyer to convict Fulford.

Fred Fulford was (no surprise here) later tried and convicted of the murder of Al Adamson. Deputy District Attorney Paul Vinegrad maintained, based on pathology results, that Fulford had bashed in Adamson's skull with a blunt heavy object and then dumped his body in the jacuzzi pit and poured a huge amount of cement over the crime scene. "This really is an overwhelming case of guilt," Vinegrad said. Given that Fulford was being employed to make renovations to the home he must have had plenty of cement on hand for this ghastly attempt to hid Al's body.

The court case established that Adamson and Fulford had a financial agreement. They were going to sell the house after Fulford had completed all the repairs and renovations and then split the money from the sale of the property. It appears then that there was some sort of disagreement or money related argument which made Fulford blow a fuse and kill Adamson. After the murder, Fulford had fled to Florida. He was even brazen enough to have Adamson's cars shipped over - whereupon he sold them.

Fulford preposterously claimed at the trial that he had no idea Adamson had been murdered and had assumed his employer's disappearance was due to the fact that Al had taken a vacation. Fulford then claimed that he had been framed for the murder but this was patently a desperate untruth. Fulford's unconvincing and fantastical pleas of innocence, predictably, did not stand up to much scrutiny in court and he was sentenced to a 25-years-to-life term in prison in 2000. There was a lengthy delay in getting an actual trial on this case because it took some time to extradite Fulford from Florida.

Fred Fulford has come up for parole a few times but the parole board has so far denied his request to be released. Adamson, a kind and well liked character, had clearly made a terrible error of judgment when he became friends with Fulford and entered into a business arrangement with him. Perhaps Fulford, clearly a disturbed and dangerous individual, hid his dark side well. The end result was tragic.

One darkly ironic thing about this case is that, before his death, Adamson had planned to return to filmmaking and even had an unproduced horror script about a man who is murdered and buried in his own house over a financial dispute. In 2020 it was announced that a special box-set featuring many of Al Adamson's old films would be released. It's just a shame that Al didn't live to see this happen.

## **GWILI ANDRE**

Gwili Andre was born Guri Anderson on February the 4th, 1908 in Copenhagen, Denmark. Andre became a famous model in Europe and graced many magazine covers. While many people lived on the breadline in those dark days she earned \$25,000 a year during the Depression and was much in demand. Her potential seemed unlimited. Gwili then moved to the United States where her statuesque blonde good looks earned her a film contract with RKO. In those days (and maybe it hasn't changed so much even now) studios would discover an attractive young woman and then try to mould her into an actress. While this sometimes worked surprisingly well there are plenty of failures too. When it came to Hollywood, Gwili Andre was destined to become what you might describe as a failed experiment.

Andre was compared to Garbo and Marlene Dietrich and featured in many gossip and entertainment articles. At one point she is alleged to have dated Howard Hughes. The stars seemed to have aligned for Gwili Andre and she was tipped to become a huge movie star. There was only one small problem. Gwili Andre couldn't act to save her life. Her early films roles were pre-code movies Roar of the Dragon, Secrets of the French Police, and No Other Woman. Andre certainly looked the part of a film star but there was something missing. She lacked the screen presence and natural relaxed charisma and wit of the great Hollywood female actors. She made the dialogue sound flat. Gwili Andre always looked and sounded like she was reading her lines off cue cards.

Critics were harsh on Gwili Andre's acting talents and described her performances as lifeless and wooden. The

columnist Frank Morris would later write - 'I have to think hard to recall the names of any of the other actresses who were foisted on the screen as Greta Garbo imitators. One of them, nevertheless, was Gwili Andre. Miss Andre was a fashion model, and she photographed to perfection. As her studio groomed her for stardom, the fan magazines and the newspapers blossomed with pictures of her. There was a more than ordinary interest in Miss Andre. Alas, in her first picture she proved to be such a stiff, colorless and completely talentless performer that she disappeared almost overnight.'

With her Hollywood career stuck in neutral and going nowhere fast, Andre concentrated on being a model and took a break from films. She also got married during this period and had a son. Gwili Andre would only make two more films in the end. Her last credit was a supporting role in the 1942 crime drama *The Falcon's Brother*. She hadn't got any better when it came to the mysterious craft of thesping. Gwili still delivered her dialogue in a robotic and disinterested fashion and clearly did not have the acting chops to be anything other than a minor background player. This realisation must have been tough for Andre to cope with given the fact that she had been groomed for Hollywood stardom.

By now her window of opportunity when it came to movies had all but shut. Her limited acting ability meant that Hollywood had more or less washed its hands of Gwili Andre and moved onto new stars. There were no shortage of new beautiful blondes in Hollywood who aspired to be an actress so Gwili Andre became yesterday's news. Andre moved back to Denmark at one point and also got divorced. She is said to have become an alcoholic. In the end she decided to go back to the United States. She lived in New York at first but then (inevitably perhaps) made her way to

California. Gwili Andre still had dreams of becoming a film star in Hollywood but these dreams were now unrealistic. Gwili was like a washed up boxer who still deludes himself that he could get his old title back.

On February the 5th, 1959, Gwili Andre died in a fire at her Venice Beach home. She was 52. The legend goes that, in a bizarre suicide ritual, she was found sprawled on the bedroom floor of her apartment, burned to a crisp in a funeral pyre she had made out of her old publicity clippings. After years of desperately trying to resurrect her career Gwili Andre had given up and allegedly taken her life in a most theatrical fashion. Whether or not this story is true or an urban myth is open to question. Investigators and neighbours found a scrapbook Gwili Andre had kept of her career as a model actually survived the flames. It seems apparent though that she was always wistful about the fact that she never quite managed to become a movie star. Her ashes were later buried at Søndermark Cemetery in Copenhagen.

## **PETER ARNE**

Peter Arne was an English actor who was born in British Malaya (Malaysia). Although he never become tremendously famous, Arne was one of those actors where you'd probably recognise his face even if you didn't know what his name was. He settled in Britain after serving in the RAF during the war. After establishing himself on the stage he became a prolific film and television actor. Arne would often play shifty crisp sounding villains or suave foreign characters. In the 1960s he appeared in popular TV shows like Danger Man, The Saint, The Champions and The Avengers. In 1968 he played Captain of Bomburst in the children's film Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and also had a role in Khartoum. His other film roles included The Cockleshell Heroes and Ice Cold in Alex. Arne was all over the place. You've probably watched him in dozens of things without ever knowing what his name was in real life.

In the next decade Arne appeared in many more films - including Straw Dogs, The Return of the Pink Panther, Agatha, and When Eight Bells Toll. Despite appearing in big movies, Arne was always more of a background actor and more than willing to supplement his income with television work. He even took a part in the infamously bad soap opera Triangle. Triangle was a BBC soap set aboard a North Sea ferry that sailed from Felixstowe to Gothenburg and Gothenburg to Amsterdam. The show was openly mocked by critics but actually ran for three seasons. Trivia you'll never need - one of the regulars in Triangle was Jonathan Scott-Taylor. Scott-Taylor was the kid who played Damien Thorn in Damien: Omen II.

Despite his dalliance with Triangle, Peter Arne was still picking up plenty of film work in the 1980s though and appeared in *Victor Victoria*, *Trail of the Pink Panther*, and *Curse of the Pink Panther* - all for the director Blake Edwards. He was happy and content in real life too. Arne had a Knightsbridge flat near Harrods and a country house in Devon. He was popular socially and attended many parties. Arne was said to be a great storyteller so he was a popular party guest. He was gay but because he moved in theatrical circles this was never much of a problem for him.

On the 1st of August 1983, Arne, who had agreed to play a part in a forthcoming episode of *Doctor Who*, was sorting out his costume at the BBC studio. Later that day he went back to his flat where something very odd and tragic obviously happened. Arne was later found beaten to death in the hallway of his ground-floor flat. He was 62 years old. It was a violent death and must have been very shocking for his neighbours when they found out. The neighbours had earlier reported hearing a commotion and noises suggesting a struggle of some sort was taking in Arne's flat.

Peter Arne was bludgeoned to death with a log from his fire and also a stool. It was a brutal and deadly attack. Because there was no sign of any forced entry the police obviously deduced that Arne must have known the killer and willingly let the suspect into the flat. That deduction proved to be on the money. Peter Arne did indeed know the person who killed him. The main suspect was a homeless man who lived rough nearby. Arne obviously knew this man because he used to give him some food from time to time.

A few days later an Italian man named Giuseppe Perusi was found dead in the River Thames. His death was ruled a suicide. Perusi was the homeless man whom Arne had sometimes given some food to. The official verdict is that

Perusi, for reasons best known to himself (or maybe due to the fact he was mentally unstable), had murdered Arne and then drowned himself. It could be that the two men argued over something. At the time the gossip in the tabloids was that Arne's sexuality may have been a factor in his death although what exactly they meant by that is open to question. It seemed a trifle distasteful to say the least to speculate in this way.

There is still though a certain degree of mystery surrounding the death of Peter Arne. We simply don't know what really happened on that fateful and tragic afternoon. Arne was a remarkably prolific and versatile sort of actor who never was never short of work. His strange and violent death was a tragic last act in his life. Who knows, if he hadn't been murdered, maybe Peter Arne would eventually have found a role that finally made him a household name.

## **ARTHUR ASHE**

Arthur Ashe was born July 10, 1943, in Richmond, Virginia. Ashe began playing tennis at the age of seven and was the first black player selected to the United States Davis Cup team and the only black man ever to win the singles title at Wimbledon, the US Open, and the Australian Open. Ashe was truly a trailblazer. He was also an intelligent and sensitive man who elicited great admiration and respect in anyone who came into contact with him.

Ashe joined the United States Army on August 4, 1966. He completed his basic training in Washington and was later commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Adjutant General Corps. He was assigned to the United States Military Academy at West Point. He ran a tennis program while in the armed forces and then embarked on a remarkable career in the sport when he left. Ashe was a natural athlete and in tennis found something he was amazingly gifted in.

It was definitely not easy for Arthur Ashe on the tennis circuit in the early days. Tennis, at the time, was still seen as a rather white and snooty country club sort of game and there was plenty of ingrained prejudice. "Get the n\*\*\*\*\* off the court," one white patron infamously shouted in March 1969 while Ashe was practicing at a country club in St. Petersburg, Florida. This was the sort of stuff Arthur Ashe had to put up with as he carved out a remarkable tennis career. This was also the sort of stuff that the Williams sisters (Serena and Venus) later had to put up with too when they started. Their father Richard withdrew Venus and Serena from a tennis academy when they were youngsters

because of the casual prejudice he had detected. Richard Williams coached them himself - with great success.

Tiger Woods also had similar experiences on his path to fame. The world of golf had never really experienced a black golfer becoming its main star and best player before. Tiger had to endure some unfortunate snobbery and casual racism on his path to superstardom. After winning the 1997 Masters Tournament, Woods had to put up with a silly comment from Fuzzy Zoeller, who won this championship in 1979. Zoeller responded to Tiger's win by stating - "That little boy is driving well and he's putting well. He's doing everything it takes to win. So you know what you guys do when he gets in here. You pat him on the back and say congratulations and enjoy it and tell him not serve fried chicken next year. Got it." Tiger has said that he experienced much snootiness and racism at golf clubs when he was making his way as a golfer.

Arthur Ashe used his fame as a tennis player to campaign for civil rights and social justice. In 1973, Ashe went to the apartheid state of South Africa (which Arthur Ashe was naturally a vocal critic of and helped to exclude from the Davis Cup in 1970) to play in the national tennis championship there. Black civil rights leaders and celebrities in the United States had urged Ashe not to go but Arthur believed that the sight of a free and successful black man playing tennis in competition with whites (and beating them too) would offer hope to black people in South Africa. The gamble of Arthur Ashe worked. He was an inspiration to all the black people in South Africa who saw him. Arthur Ashe showed them that anything was possible.

Ashe supported the founding of the Association of Tennis Professionals and went on to become its elected president in 1974. After retiring from playing in 1980, he became captain