

Marlon Brando Passes Away Elsewhere...

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Stage and Film Actor Dies at 80

"To grasp the full significance of life is the actor's duty, to interpret it is his problem, and to express it his dedication." ~ Marlon Brando

Legendary actor Marlon Brando has passed away at the age of 80 in a Los Angeles hospital on Thursday. The cause of death is still unknown.

Brando was born on April 3, 1924 in Omaha, Nebraska, but grew up in Illinois. After expulsion from a Military Academy and digging ditches with his father, Brando set off to New York City to study acting with Stella Adler at Lee Strasbergs Actors Studio

Adler has often been credited as the principal inspiration in Brandos early career, and with opening the actor to great works of literature, music, and theater. While at the Actors' Studio, Brando adopted the "method approach," which emphasizes characters' motivations for actions. He made his Broadway debut in John Van Druten's sentimental I Remember Mama (1944). New York theater critics voted him Broadway's Most Promising Actor for his performance in Truckline Caf(1946). In 1947, he played his greatest stage role, Stanley Kowalski the brute who rapes his sister-in-law, the fragile Blanche du Bois in Tennessee Williams's A Streetcar Named Desire.

Hollywood beckoned to Brando, and he made his motion picture debut as a paraplegic World War II veteran in The Men (1950). Although he did not cooperate with the Hollywood publicity machine, he went on to play Kowalski in the 1951 film version of A Streetcar Named Desire, a popular and critical success that earned four Academy Awards. His next movie, Viva Zapata! (1952), with a script by John Steinbeck, traces Emiliano Zapata's rise from peasant to revolutionary to president of Mexico. Brando followed that with Julius Caesar and then The Wild One (1954), in which he played a motorcycle-gang leader in all his leather-jacketed glory.

Next came his Academy Award-winning role as a longshoreman fighting the system in On the Waterfront, a hard-hitting look at New York City labor unions.

During the rest of the decade, Brando's screen roles ranged from Napoleon Bonaparte in *Dir* (1954), to Sky Masterson in 1955's *Guys and Dolls*, in which he sang and danced, to a Nazi soldier in *The Young Lions* (1958). From 1955 to 1958, movie exhibitors voted him one of the top 10 box-office draws in the nation. During the 1960s, however, his career had more downs than ups, especially after the MGM studio's disastrous 1962 remake of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, which failed to recoup even half of its enormous budget. Brando portrayed Fletcher Christian, Clark Gable's role in the 1935 original. Brando's excessive self-indulgence reached a pinnacle during the filming of this movie. He was criticized for his on-set tantrums and for trying to alter the script. Off the set, he had numerous affairs, ate too much, and distanced himself from the cast and crew. His contract for making the movie included \$5,000 for every day the film went over its original schedule. He made \$1.25 million when all was said and done.

Brando's career was reborn in 1972 with his depiction of Mafia chieftain Don Corleone in Francis Ford Coppola's *The Godfather*, a role for which he received the Academy Award for Best Actor. He turned down the Oscar, however, in protest of Hollywood's treatment of Native Americans. Brando himself did not appear at the awards show.

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