



The Ice Cream Blonde: The Whirlwind Life and Mysterious Death of Screwball Comedienne Thelma Todd

Michelle Morgan

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A detailed look at the charmed life and tragic death of one of Hollywood's earliest stars

A vibrant and beloved Golden Age film comedienne who worked alongside the Marx Brothers, Laurel and Hardy, Ginger Rogers, Cary Grant, Clara Bow, and dozens of others, Thelma Todd was one of the rare actors to successfully cross over from silent films to “talkies.” This authoritative new biography traces Todd's life and career, from a vivacious little girl to a young woman who became a reluctant beauty queen to her rapid rise as a Hollywood comedy star to her mysterious death at the age of 29. Increasingly disenchanted with the studio star system, Todd opened the successful Thelma Todd's Sidewalk Café, attracting adoring fans, tourists, and Hollywood celebrities. Life appeared blessed for the beautiful and outspoken Hollywood rebel. So the country was shocked when Todd was found dead by her housekeeper in a garage near the café. An inquest concluded that her death was accidental, caused by inhaling the car's exhaust fumes. In a thorough new investigation that draws on FBI documents, interviews, photographs, reports, and extortion notes—much of these not previously available to the public—author Michelle Morgan offers fresh evidence and conclusions about the circumstances surrounding Todd's death, proving what many people have long suspected, that Thelma had been murdered. The cast of suspects includes Thelma's Hollywood-director lover; her gangster ex-husband; assorted thugs who were pressuring her to install gaming tables in the room above her popular café; and a new, never-before-named mobster. Coinciding with the 80th anniversary of Todd's death, *The Ice Cream Blonde* is sure to interest any fan of Thelma Todd, Hollywood's Golden Age, or gripping real-life murder mysteries.

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