The enigmas surrounding one of Hollywood’s best-known cults has at last been decoded, thanks to the upcoming arrival, in early May (2016) of the first comprehensive biography of the rise to fame of Hollywood icon, James Dean.

Written to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the violent death of a star who lived fast, died young, and became a legend, this book was compiled after fifty years of input from James Dean’s friends, lovers (male and female), and enemies. Much of the information within it has never been published before. New, uncensored, and unauthorized, it’s the first comprehensive biography of the actor ever published, a groundbreaking, one-of-a-kind overview of the widely marketed yet widely misunderstood symbol of the inarticulated rage of America’s rebellious youth.

Input from hundreds of other players revealed strong opinions, both good and bad, about the seductive but psychologically damaged powerhouse in their midst. Many of the revelations derived from specific first-hand sources whose voices have never been heard before.

ROGERS BRACKETT. A flamboyant but deeply closeted TV producer at CBS, Brackett first “discovered” James Dean, then a parking lot attendant and hustler turning tricks on the streets of L.A. Falling desperately in love with him, Brackett paid his bills, introduced him to many of the entertainment industry’s casting directors, and configured him as his live-in lover. Suffering through Dean’s emotional aberrations and his perhaps bipolar mood swings, Brackett tolerated his “mercy fucks” and calculated infidelities with a constellation of other, often very famous, sex partners, all of which are documented. He also included insights into the young actor’s murky explorations of the sexual undergounds of NYC and L.A. Another key source of information was:

ALEC WILDER. An influential and avant-garde composer of the early 50s, well-connected on Broadway and in Hollywood, Wilder housed Dean during the early days of his migration to New York, introducing him to key players in the Entertainment Industry, including scriptwriters, television directors, singers such as Peggy Lee, and such playwrights as Tennessee Williams and William Inge. Many of them enticed Jimmy (or were enticed by him) onto their casting couches.

Another prominent source about Dean was STANLEY HAGGART, who was a “leg man” for Hedda Hopper and the lover of her son, William Hopper. Haggart was also an art director in the nascent days of early television, where Dean got his start. Haggart had first arrived in Hollywood in 1917. He knew seemingly everyone and by the time Dean entered the scene, Haggart had already befriended (and slept with) many stars. Haggart became a sort of advisor and counselor to Dean, providing a setting within his luxurious apartment in Manhattan or at his showcase home in Laurel Canyon, in Hollywood, for many of Dean’s off-the-record trysts.

In addition to the testimonial of the three figures noted above, over the course of many decades, Darwin Porter, himself a long-time scholar of the celebrity scenes of NYC and L.A., also drew upon never-before-published revelations from dozens
of Dean’s close friends and frenemies, Montgomery Clift, Tennessee Williams, Geraldine Page, Eartha Kitt, and at least a hundred others.

Revealed in this book for the first time are fact-driven overviews of Dean’s friendships, feuds, and love affairs with his competitors... i.e. the other bad boys of Hollywood: Marlon Brando, Steve McQueen, John Kerr, Monty Clift, Paul Newman, Rock Hudson, and Tony (“Psycho”) Perkins. Separate chapters are devoted to the backlot intrigues associated with the trio of movies that established James Dean as a Hollywood immortal: East of Eden, Rebel Without a Cause, and the saga indelibly associated with the oil industry of Texas, Giant.

This book also contains revelations about budding starlets Dean seduced, and a detailed behind-the-scenes look at his television and theater career, including his involvement in almost 40 teleplays (some of which are lost forever) in which he starred. In one of them (a Broadway production of Andre Gide’s The Immoralist), he convincingly portrayed a male Arab prostitute and blackmailer. In another, The Dark, Dark Hour, he pointed a gun at a fading B-picture actor (Ronald Reagan) and threatened to blow out the brains of the character he was portraying.

James Dean long maintained, as richly described in this book, that he was sexually active—sometimes repeatedly—with some of the biggest names in Hollywood. Now, through the revelations in this book, we’re aware of quite a legendary few: Cole Porter, Tallulah Bankhead, Barbara Hutton, Judy Garland, Joan Crawford, Marilyn Monroe, Elizabeth Taylor, Grace Kelly, and Spencer Tracy. Two unexpected but tantalizing outings include J. Edgar Hoover and the very closeted Walt Disney. As Dean himself said, “Time spent on a casting couch is a lot easier that living on the hard, cold sidewalk, and I refuse to go through life with one hand tied behind my back.”

According to Danforth Prince, “The release of this book represents a milestone for Blood Moon. It’s a tantalizing portrayal of the early days of television and of Hollywood in the 50s. We are especially proud of its senior co-author, Darwin Porter. His work has changed, permanently and forever, some of America’s most deeply entrenched myths about fame, celebrity, and show-biz—and perhaps some of the core values of the American experience itself.”

For more information about specific celebrities whose secrets, as associated with James Dean, are revealed within this book, please refer to its Table on Contents on the pages that follow.

Blood Moon Productions is a feisty and independent publishing enterprise dedicated to researching, salvaging, and indexing the oral histories of America’s entertainment industry. As described by The Huffington Post, “Blood Moon, in case you don’t know, is a small publishing house on Staten Island that cranks out Hollywood gossip books, about two or three a year, usually of five-, six-, or 700-page length, chocked with stories and pictures about people who used to consume the imaginations of the American public, back when we actually had a public imagination. That is, when people were really interested in each other, rather than in Apple ‘devices.’ In other words, back when we had vices, not devices.”

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