

Harlow, Jean (1911-1937) Encyclopedia Article

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Known for her platinum blonde hair, low-cut gowns, and buxom figure, Jean Harlow was Hollywood's original "blonde bombshell." Harlow's bold sexuality—she refused to wear undergarments, for example—made her both a box-office hit and an icon of modern sexual freedom. But it was not only Harlow's starring roles—in such films as *Platinum Blonde* (1931), *Red Dust* (1932), and *China Seas* (1936)—that made news. The unexplained suicide of her husband, MGM executive Paul Bern, and her own mysterious death from uremia at age 26, made Harlow a tragic symbol of the fleeting pleasures of Hollywood stardom.

Further Reading:

Shulman, Irving. *Harlow: An Intimate Biography*. New York, Dell, 1964.

Stenn, David. *Bombshell: The Life and Death of Jean Harlow*. New York, Doubleday, 1993.