

News

MEDIA

Limerick star's Hollywood dream turned to nightmare



Constance Smith

by Alan Jacques
alan@limerickpost.ie

LIMERICK actress Constance Smith enjoyed Hollywood stardom in over 30 movies in the 1950s.

Dubbed by 'Man in the Attic' co-star Jack Palance as the "Dublin Dietrich", she was also hailed as the next Grace Kelly and the "intelligent man's Elizabeth Taylor".

Born in 1928, Constance's star quickly ascended after a movie-star lookalike contest at 17 led to a contract with Arthur J. Rank. Headhunted by world-famous producer Darryl Zanuck after featuring in low-budget films in the UK, Smith forged a successful career in Hollywood by her early 20s. She went on to star in films such as 'Impulse', 'Red Skies of Montana', 'Treasure of the Golden Condor', 'The Mudlark' and 'Lure of the Wilderness'.

However, the troubled star refused to be pigeonholed, and her independent and determined streak eventually lost her favour with chauvinistic studio executives and ultimately cost her film parts. When the parts dried up, Constance's career took a downward spiral into drugs and drink, and sadly, ending up in imprisonment and an impoverished death.

'Constance Smith - Hollywood Tragedy' will be screened on TG4 this Thursday, January 3 at 9.30pm. The documentary charts her tragic life story featuring interviews with family, fans and contemporaries.

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