

0. ERROL FLYNN after the TRIAL - Story Preface

1. ERROL FLYNN after the TRIAL



Errol Flynn's coffin arrives at LA's Union Station on the 19th of October, 1959. Image online, courtesy *The Los Angeles Times* Photographic Archive, UCLA Library. Photo ID: uclalat_1429_b404_119470. License: [CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 US](#)

If the jury had found against Flynn, he would have received a jail sentence which he planned to avoid:

I had no intention of going to jail. My two-engine plane was out at Burbank, waiting, so that if I got a bum rap, I'd get out there, hop in, and leave America and my screen career forever. (Errol Flynn, *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*, at page 329).

Flynn didn't have to leave America and forsake his career, of course, because the jury acquitted him of all rape charges.

Despite the jury's verdict, the trial had a profound impact on the rest of Errol Flynn's life. We know that because of what he himself wrote about it.

In his autobiography - entitled *My Wicked, Wicked Ways* - Flynn acknowledges:

... the personal humiliation that stayed with me as a consequence of the trial (*Wicked Ways*, page 350)

He wanted to get back into his life, so he decided to have a party at his home. He invited lots of people. On the day of the event, it didn't take Errol long to realize that:

... practically nobody was coming. A handful of people showed, perhaps a half-dozen. (*Wicked Ways*, page 339.)

He'd won, at the trial, but:

... yet I knew I had lost. I knew that I could never escape this brand that was now upon me: that I would always be associated in the public mind with an internationally followed rape case. (*Wicked Ways*, page 335.)

Although his next film was another big win, at the box office, Flynn did not feel personally successful:

Inside I was smarting, terribly wounded from the scar of the rape trial. I knew now I would never get over it. (*Wicked Ways*, page 345.)

Flynn began to think, introspectively, about his life. Where would he be had he charted a completely different course for himself?

How did I ever wander so far afield of my youthful ambitions? What would have happened if I hadn't met the movie man Swartz and taken him up the Sepik River and later played Fletcher Christian in a moving picture made in Polynesia? Would I still be a bum in the land down under [Flynn was Australian, born in Tasmania]? Would I have gone on and educated myself and made something of myself in England? (*Wicked Ways*, page 349.)

What if he *had* followed his youthful aspirations? He was a huge film star, making lots of money, but he *had* taken a wrong turn. Was it too late to make a course correction? Did he *want* to make a course correction?

That which I had, my big house, my yacht, my bank accounts, seemed hollow. None of these could take the place of self-respect, which I had lost. (*Wicked Ways*, page 349).

In the end, the impact of his own deeds - and the price he paid for those deeds (whether he'd won or lost at the 1943 rape trial) - stayed with Errol Flynn.

After he died of a heart attack in Vancouver (Canada), at the age of 50, a coroner examined his body. In addition to the heart attack, the press reported what the medical examiner discovered:

... fatty degeneration of the liver, portal cirrhosis of the liver and diverticulosis of the colon. (John Mackie reporting in the *Vancouver Sun* on 14 October 1959. See, also, Today in History: *The Vancouver Sun*, Saturday 13 October 2012, at page A2.)

The jury's acquittal had allowed Errol Flynn to continue his life free of incarceration. The true impact of the trial, however - and its aftermath - looks quite different when we couple public events with Flynn's own words.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/ERROL-FLYNN-after-the-TRIAL-Errol-Flynn-and-His-Famous-Trial>

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Media Stream

Coffin of Errol Flynn at the LA Train Station

After Errol Flynn died in Vancouver - on the 14th of October 1959 - authorities in Canada sent his remains to Los Angeles on a train. Flynn's coffin arrived at LA's Union Station shortly after his death.

This image, which is online courtesy the Library at UCLA, depicts Flynn's coffin on the station's platform.

When the picture was published in the *Los Angeles Times* (on Monday the 19th of October, 1959), it included this caption:

FLYNN RETURNED -- Errol Flynn's body, being returned here for funeral services, arrives at Union Station in conventional transportation coffin. In dark suit and hat behind the coffin is Buster Wiles, Flynn's double and friend.

Click on the image for a better view.

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