

errol flynn the actor

Errol Flynn the actor remains one of the most iconic and charismatic figures in Hollywood history, renowned for his swashbuckling roles, magnetic screen presence, and adventurous persona that captivated audiences during the Golden Age of cinema. With a career spanning over two decades, Flynn's legacy endures as a symbol of romantic heroism and daring adventure on the silver screen.

Early Life and Background

Birth and Childhood

Errol Flynn was born on June 20, 1909, in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia, as Errol Leslie Thomson Flynn. His early years were marked by a tumultuous family life, including the death of his father and a series of relocations. Flynn's childhood experiences, including time spent in England and Australia, shaped his adventurous spirit and desire for excitement.

Migration to Hollywood

Flynn migrated to the United States in the early 1930s, initially pursuing a career in acting after working various jobs, including as a stage actor and bit player in films. His striking looks and dynamic personality soon caught the attention of Hollywood producers.

Rise to Stardom

Breakthrough Roles

Flynn's big break came with the 1935 film *Captain Blood*, where he portrayed the charismatic Dr. Peter Blood. His performance was a revelation, combining rugged charm with a sense of adventure, setting the stage for his persona as the quintessential Hollywood hero.

Defining Films

Throughout the late 1930s and 1940s, Flynn starred in a series of successful films, including:

- **The Adventures of Robin Hood** (1938) – Arguably his most famous role, Flynn's portrayal of Robin Hood became legendary, showcasing his agility, wit, and leadership.

- **The Sea Hawk** (1940) – A swashbuckling tale of piracy and heroism.
- **The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex** (1939) – A historical drama highlighting Flynn's versatility as an actor.

His performances often combined physical prowess with a natural ease that made him a favorite among audiences worldwide.

Style and Persona

On-Screen Charisma

Flynn's screen presence was characterized by a mix of rugged masculinity, charm, and a devil-may-care attitude. He was known for performing his own stunts, which added authenticity to his action sequences.

Off-Screen Image

Flynn cultivated an image of a daring adventurer, often associated with a bohemian lifestyle. His reputation as a ladies' man and raconteur contributed to his mythic status, though it also brought controversy and legal issues.

Controversies and Personal Life

Legal Troubles and Scandals

Flynn's personal life was marked by a series of legal issues, including allegations of statutory rape during the 1940s, which he always denied. These controversies affected his career and public image, leading to blacklisting in some circles.

Marriages and Relationships

Flynn was married three times and had several high-profile relationships. His marriages included:

- Lynne Carver (1936–1941)
- Peggy Sager (1943–1949)
- Patricia Wykes (1950–1953)

His romantic life was often as turbulent as his career, fueling the persona of the adventurous rogue.

Later Career and Decline

Post-War Years

After World War II, Flynn's career faced challenges due to changing Hollywood tastes, legal troubles, and aging. Although he continued acting, his roles became less prominent, and he struggled to regain his earlier success.

Final Years and Legacy

Flynn's career waned in the 1950s, and he turned to television and stage work. He passed away on October 14, 1959, at the age of 50, due to a heart attack. Despite his relatively short life, Flynn's influence endured through his iconic films and persona.

Legacy and Influence

Impact on Hollywood

Errol Flynn set the standard for the adventure hero archetype in cinema. His combination of athleticism, charm, and daring performances inspired countless actors and filmmakers. Films like *Robin Hood* remain classics and are frequently referenced in pop culture.

Popular Culture and References

Flynn's persona has been celebrated and parodied in various movies, television shows, and literature. The term "Flynn" has even become synonymous with a romantic, adventurous hero.

Posthumous Recognition

In recognition of his contributions, Flynn has received numerous tributes, including film retrospectives, biographies, and documentaries that explore his life and career.

Conclusion

Errol Flynn the actor epitomized the golden age of Hollywood adventure films. His captivating performances, charismatic personality, and legendary status as a swashbuckler continue to inspire audiences worldwide. Despite facing personal and legal challenges, Flynn's legacy as a quintessential Hollywood hero remains undiminished, ensuring his place in cinematic history as one of the most enduring figures of his era.

FAQs About Errol Flynn

1. **What was Errol Flynn's most famous role?** His portrayal of Robin Hood in *The Adventures of Robin Hood* (1938) is widely regarded as his most iconic role.
2. **Did Errol Flynn serve in the military?** Flynn's military service was limited; he was classified as 4-F due to health issues and did not serve in combat during World War II.
3. **What is Errol Flynn's legacy today?** Flynn's legacy lives on through his classic films, influence on adventure cinema, and his enduring image as the quintessential Hollywood swashbuckler.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are some of Errol Flynn's most iconic films?

Errol Flynn is best known for classic swashbuckling roles in films like 'The Adventures of Robin Hood,' 'Captain Blood,' 'The Sea Hawk,' and 'The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex.'

How did Errol Flynn influence the Hollywood action-adventure genre?

Errol Flynn set the standard for the romantic, daring hero in action-adventure films, combining athleticism and charisma, which greatly influenced the genre and inspired future actors.

What were some controversies or challenges faced by Errol Flynn during his career?

Flynn's career was marred by legal troubles and allegations of scandal, including accusations of misconduct and issues with the law, which impacted his reputation and career trajectory.

What is Errol Flynn's legacy in modern cinema?

Errol Flynn is remembered as one of the quintessential swashbuckling heroes, with his charismatic screen presence and adventurous roles shaping the romantic action hero archetype for generations.

Did Errol Flynn serve in the military or have any involvement during World War II?

Although he did not serve in combat, Errol Flynn contributed to the war effort by entertaining troops and participating in war bond drives, leveraging his fame to support the Allied cause.

Additional Resources

Errol Flynn: The Legendary Swashbuckler of Hollywood's Golden Age

In the pantheon of classic Hollywood stars, few figures evoke the image of dashing adventure, charismatic presence, and undeniable charm quite like Errol Flynn. Revered as the quintessential swashbuckler, Flynn's career spanned the 1930s and 1940s, cementing his status as one of the most iconic actors of his era. His performances in films such as *Captain Blood*, *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, and *The Sea Hawk* have become benchmarks for adventure cinema, influencing countless actors and filmmakers. But beyond the onscreen persona, Flynn's life was a tapestry of triumph, controversy, and enduring legacy. This article offers an in-depth examination of Errol Flynn's career, his cinematic impact, and the complexities that define the man behind the legend.

Early Life and Path to Stardom

Origins and Background

Errol Flynn was born on June 20, 1909, in Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. His father, Theodore Flynn, was a university professor, and his mother, Lily, was a concert singer. Flynn's early life was marked by a restless spirit and a penchant for adventure—traits that would later define his screen persona. He attended several schools across Australia and Europe, developing an interest in acting, sports, and outdoor pursuits.

Despite a somewhat tumultuous childhood—marked by family disagreements and financial difficulties—Flynn's desire to escape his circumstances led him to pursue a career in entertainment. His initial forays into acting were modest, involving stage performances and small roles in Australian films. However, it was his move to the United States in the early 1930s that would set the stage for his Hollywood breakthrough.

Transition to Hollywood

Flynn's arrival in Hollywood was initially marked by struggle. He signed with Warner Bros. but was cast in minor roles that failed to showcase his potential. His striking looks and charismatic presence, however, caught the attention of studio executives, and he quickly earned a reputation as a talented but underutilized actor.

It was the signing with Warner Bros. that proved pivotal. His first notable role came in the 1935 film *Captain Blood*, directed by Michael Curtiz. This swashbuckling adventure was a critical and commercial success, introducing audiences to Flynn's athleticism, wit, and magnetic screen presence. The film established Flynn as a leading man and set the pattern for his future career.

The Rise to Stardom: Iconic Films and Roles

Breakthrough with Captain Blood

Captain Blood (1935) is widely regarded as Flynn's defining film and a cornerstone of adventure cinema. Playing Dr. Peter Blood, a physician turned pirate, Flynn displayed a perfect blend of daring heroism and romantic charm. The film's success was instrumental in shaping Flynn's image: a romantic, adventurous, and somewhat rebellious hero.

The movie's popularity not only made Flynn a household name but also established the template for the romantic adventure genre. His swashbuckling sequences, combined with a charismatic delivery, set a high standard that he would maintain throughout his career.

The Adventures of Robin Hood (1938)

Arguably Flynn's most celebrated role, *The Adventures of Robin Hood* is often cited as the pinnacle of his career. Directed by Michael Curtiz and William Keighley, the film features Flynn as the legendary outlaw Robin Hood, fighting injustice in medieval England.

This film encapsulates Flynn's appeal: effortless charm, physical agility, and a sense of moral righteousness. His Robin Hood is witty, daring, and charismatic—an idealized hero who embodies the escapist spirit of Hollywood's Golden Age.

The film's technical achievements, including vibrant Technicolor

cinematography and lively action sequences, combined with Flynn's magnetic performance, made it a timeless classic. It cemented his status as Hollywood's premier swashbuckler.

Other Notable Films

Beyond Robin Hood, Flynn's filmography boasts numerous classics:

- The Sea Hawk (1940): An adventurous tale set during the Elizabethan era, showcasing Flynn's naval prowess and romantic heroism.
- The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex (1939): A historical drama highlighting Flynn's versatility in more serious roles.
- Dodge City (1939): A Western that demonstrates his adaptability across genres.
- They Died with Their Boots On (1941): A dramatization of General Custer's life, blending history with action.

Flynn's ability to inhabit diverse roles—whether pirate, soldier, or nobleman—helped him maintain a prolific career and a broad fan base.

Screen Persona and Acting Style

The Charismatic Swashbuckler

Flynn's on-screen persona was characterized by a combination of rugged masculinity, wit, and a touch of rebellious charm. He exuded a natural confidence that made him the ideal hero for adventure films. His athleticism was evident in the fight scenes, swordplay, and stunts that became synonymous with his films.

His acting style was more about presence and charisma than subtlety. Flynn's delivery was often spontaneous, giving his characters a lively, spontaneous energy that resonated with audiences. His natural ease in front of the camera made his performances appear effortless, which only enhanced his star appeal.

Influence on Hollywood and Genre

Flynn's influence extended beyond his performances. He helped popularize the adventure genre, combining action, romance, and humor into a captivating package. His portrayal of Robin Hood, in particular, set a template for the heroic outlaw archetype in popular culture.

He also demonstrated that leading men could be both physically active and emotionally engaging, paving the way for future stars to blend action with charisma. His style influenced actors like Cary Grant, Clark Gable, and later, Harrison Ford.

Controversies and Personal Life

Legal Troubles and Scandals

Flynn's life off-screen was tumultuous, marked by legal issues, allegations, and personal struggles. His reputation was marred by accusations of misconduct, including allegations of underage relationships, which became public during the late 1940s and early 1950s.

In 1943, Flynn was arrested and briefly jailed on charges of statutory rape, though he was acquitted. These scandals cast a long shadow over his career, and his popularity waned as Hollywood and society's attitudes shifted.

Relationships and Marriages

Flynn was married three times, to Lili Damita, Beverly Aadland, and Patini Kendrick. His relationships often attracted media attention, and his personal life was frequently scrutinized. Despite the controversies, Flynn maintained a charismatic and resilient public persona.

Health and Decline

In his later years, Flynn's health declined due to alcohol abuse and the toll of a turbulent life. His career slowed, and he struggled to find roles that matched his earlier stardom. He retired from acting in the early 1950s, with his reputation permanently intertwined with his legendary film roles.

Legacy and Cultural Impact

Enduring Influence in Film and Popular Culture

Despite the controversies, Flynn's legacy endures. His films continue to be celebrated for their energy, charm, and style. *The Adventures of Robin Hood* remains a benchmark in adventure filmmaking, inspiring countless adaptations and homages.

Many actors have cited Flynn as an influence, and his embodiment of the romantic hero has become an archetype in cinema history.

Honors and Recognition

Flynn received several posthumous honors, including a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Film historians and critics have lauded his contributions to genre filmmaking, noting his charisma and pioneering spirit.

Modern Reassessment

In recent decades, there has been a nuanced reassessment of Flynn's life—acknowledging both his cinematic achievements and the darker aspects of his personal history. This balanced perspective ensures that his legacy remains complex yet enduring.

Conclusion: A Timeless Legend

Errol Flynn stands as one of Hollywood's most enduring icons—a star whose charisma, athleticism, and adventurous spirit defined an era. His films continue to captivate audiences, embodying the escapist fantasy that characterized the Golden Age of Hollywood. While his life was not without controversy, the magic he brought to the screen remains undeniable.

Flynn's legacy as the quintessential swashbuckler endures, inspiring generations of filmmakers and actors to seek the same blend of daring heroism and magnetic charm. Whether viewed through the lens of nostalgia or cinematic excellence, Errol Flynn's contribution to film history remains both significant and legendary.

Errol Flynn The Actor

errol flynn the actor: My Wicked, Wicked Ways Errol Flynn, 2002-11-04 Scandalous film star Errol Flynn tells all in this autobiography, detailing his pre-Hollywood career as a mercenary, and his trial for rape in 1943.

errol flynn the actor: *Errol Flynn* David Bret, 2014-02-06 With his stunning looks and swashbuckling onscreen panache Errol Flynn was by all appearances the quintessential movie star who had it all. But Flynn's manicured Hollywood persona did little to hide his insatiable appetites off-screen - the binge drinking, brawling and womanising that would forever cement his place as a film legend. In this hard-hitting study, bestselling show business biographer David Bret traces the life and loves of the actor and man. It was Flynn's natural charisma and athletic prowess that made him as the heartthrob star of *Captain Blood* and *The Adventures Of Robin Hood*. But Hollywood's prodigal son was never far from controversy and scandal. In a series of extraordinary revelations Bret explores the star's love of underage girls, young men, binge drinking and drug experimentation, as well as his controversial background as a slave-trader in New Guinea, involvement with the Spanish civil war and his support for Castro. This is compelling and engrossing portrait of the original action-adventure star, who packed more into his fifty years than his high-living contemporaries ever could. The gifted, complex and rakish rebel remains without equal as the film icon of the 20th century. This book is an excellent tribute to an extraordinary actor. David Bret was born in Paris and is a leading celebrity biographer. His many acclaimed books include biographies of Marlene Dietrich, Gracie Fields, Freddie Mercury, Tallulah Bankhead, Maria Callas, Rudolph Valentino, Edith Piaf and Joan Crawford. He lives in Yorkshire.

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extremely close camaraderie of our 11 crewmembers flying combat in our ship named NO SWEAT. These anecdotes are not the grand strategies or the statistics of military planners--but rather of those smaller happenings to relatively average people, crewmembers and others, who in some cases rose to grander levels of the human spirit --with some gone missing! That I have already had several friends read just a few of my anecdotes, and critique as they have, has assured me that I have done what I had intended--to relate here the sadness, terror, humor, and joy sometimes occurring within moments of each other! Bud, I read all your postings, some times with tears, others with laughter but always with enjoyment. Don Brzezinski, WW II B-29 Combat Crewman

errol flynn the actor: The Baron of Mulholland William R. Bremer, 2006 Visit the author's website at <http://www.inlikeflynn.com/flynn.html> Several years after the death of her famous father, the teenaged Rory Flynn was discovered by the modeling world and thereafter worked as a high fashion model in New York, London and Paris for nearly a decade. Afterward, she decided to try her talents on the other side of the camera and has since traveled the world as a still photographer for the film industry. Currently, she is happily based in the Hollywood Hills, where she lives with her film producer husband Gideon Amir and their teenaged son Sean, who is carrying on the Flynn name as a successful film and television actor.

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errol flynn the actor: Errol Flynn Robert Florczyk, 2022-02-28 Though there have been myriad books on Errol Flynn - scores of biographies, film studies, analyses, etc. - there has never been one that unfurls his dashing life day-by-day, predominantly through photos, letters, news clippings, and documents. This book does so: from Flynn's birth in Hobart, Australia in 1909 through to his death in Vancouver, Canada in 1959, with over 1,000 images (many rarely or never before published) culled from Florczyk's personal collection of over 11,000. The book is the result of the author's travels around the world to photograph locations key to Flynn's life, and with text gathered from years of research in the Warner Bros. Archives, the USC Cinematic Arts Library, and the Margaret Herrick Library. Among other popular day-by-day pictorial biographies are those of Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe, Judy Garland, Ernest Hemingway, Elvis Presley, The Beatles, and Eric Clapton. Flynn's colorful life was lived out on the world stage and a better candidate for a book of this style would be hard to find.

errol flynn the actor: Errol Flynn Peter Valenti, 1984-10-24 Peter Valenti presents an objective evaluation of Flynn's impact on both American popular culture and the development of motion pictures. The book begins with a brief biography of the actor, followed by a complete history of his screen, radio, and television career, an annotated guide to popular and scholarly materials on Flynn, and a bibliography of his own writings and the publications in which they appeared. Valenti ends with a series of personal interviews held with Flynn at various points in his often infamous career.

errol flynn the actor: *Hollywood's Original Rat Pack* Stephen C. Jordan, 2008 In the 1930s and '40s an untamed group of Hollywood notables, men most well-known for their talents on the silver screen, frequently met and behaved in a manner that no doubt made them infamous within their community. The group included John Barrymore, Errol Flynn, W. C. Fields, Anthony Quinn, Vincent Price, and the eccentric artist John Decker. *Hollywood's Original Rat Pack* revisits the lives and times of this free-spirited gang and rekindles the spirit of their excesses. In this lighthearted history, Jordan introduces the members of the Bundy Drive Boys, focuses on the unique personality traits each offered, and brings their lusty stories of carousing and debauchery to life in a manner that pays tribute to their carefree, if admittedly reckless, antics.

errol flynn the actor: The Errol Flynn Novel Geoff Nicholson, 1993

errol flynn the actor: The Young Errol John Hammond Moore, 2011-11-08 A fascinating account of the early life of one of Australia's most colorful and controversial sons. John Hammond Moore trace film star Errol Flynn's turbulent career from his birth in Hobart through his eccentric schooldays and his youth in Sydney and cruising the Pacific to his years as a pioneer

tobacco planter in Papua and the discovery that led to Hollywood and stardom. The author comments: While his golden age in Hollywood produced wondrous swashbuckling, Errol Flynn was not really acting at all. He was merely transferring a natural style developed in Sydney, Port Moresby, Rabaul, and London to a much larger audience. Anecdotes, quotations from Flynn's own diaries and from people who knew him in Australia and Papua New Guinea crowd one upon the other to underscore this truth, and to embellish this rollicking tale of a man who in the author's words: lived for half a century the sort of life adolescents dream of but men dare not attempt.

errol flynn the actor: Errol Flynn Tony Thomas, 1990-01-01

errol flynn the actor: *Errol Flynn Slept Here* Robert Matzen, Michael Mazzone, 2015-05-15 Documenting the most notorious house in Hollywood, this history spans the life and death of Mulholland Farm, the elegant and infamous mountaintop showplace built by film star Errol Flynn at the height of his fame. While appearing to be stylish and refined, Flynn installed secret passageways, two-way mirrors, and other voyeuristic tools into the house to spy on the famous women he entertained, as well as couples making love. He lived in Mulholland Farm during Hollywood's Golden Era, when he was the most famous playboy movie star alive, remaining in the home through the rape trial that almost ruined him and the snatching of John Barrymore's body. The intricate story of the farm also spans five continents to include Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Ronald Reagan, Fidel Castro, Humphrey Bogart, Shirley Temple, Clark Gable, Billy Graham, Johnny Cash, Roy Rogers, the Rolling Stones, and the other two owners of the property, Christian singer/songwriter Stuart Hamblen and rock 'n' roll legend Rick Nelson.

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errol flynn the actor: *Legends of Hollywood* Charles River Charles River Editors, Charles River, 2014-04-23 *Includes pictures. *Includes Flynn's quotes about his life and career. *Includes a bibliography for further reading. "The public has always expected me to be a playboy, and a decent chap never lets his public down." - Errol Flynn Hollywood has never lacked leading men who could captivate viewers with dramatic performances that depict them as suave romantics or dashing heroes, especially during the Golden Age of Hollywood when stars like Humphrey Bogart, Clark Gable, and Cary Grant graced screens. But in 1940, the 4th most popular star in the U.S. was a foreign actor from Australia, and unlike other movie stars, he was more notorious for his pursuits off the screen than on it. In an era long before social media and TMZ, Errol Flynn represented the epitome of a swashbuckling playboy, with enough mystery and intrigue surrounding him and his background to fascinate even those who didn't see his movies. An article in Time magazine got to the heart of the matter in 1938 when it noted, "Of all the heroes of Hollywood, Errol Flynn has by long odds the greatest amount of non-phony glamor. His life has been as adventurous as any of the swashbuckling characters he has portrayed. At 18 he was a member of the English Olympic boxing team. At 19 he was master of an island trading schooner in the South Seas. He has chased head-hunters in New Guinea and recruited blacks for British miners. Once he made \$5,000 mining gold, got drunk and blew it all on a schooner, The Sirocco, which he sailed in the South Seas and wrote a book about (Beam Ends)." Even Hollywood stars accustomed to mingling with each other were awestruck by Flynn, who was an industry newcomer in 1935 but a huge star in just a few years. When Olivia de Havilland, who would eventually become an Academy Award winner and played Melanie in *Gone With the Wind*, met Flynn ahead of appearing with him in *Captain Blood* (1935), she recalled, "And I walked onto the set, and they said, 'Would you please stand next to Mr. Flynn?' and I saw him. Oh my! Oh my! Struck dumb. I knew it was what the French call a coup de foudre. So I took my position next to him...We had never met, and we just stood there next to each other. Oh!" Studio head Jack Warner once offered quite a flattering description as well: "He was all the heroes in one magnificent, sexy, animal package. I just wish we had someone around today half as good as Flynn." Naturally, when he was at the peak of his powers both on and off the screen,

Flynn frequently joked about his lifestyle and traded upon it for popularity, with comments like "I like my whisky old and my women young" and "Women won't let me stay single and I won't let me stay married." Not surprisingly, Flynn was just as fast and loose with his money, to the extent that he once asserted, "Any man who has \$10,000 left when he dies is a failure." This led many to assume that far from being content with life, Flynn was actually "tormented" (as de Havilland once put it) or covering up his own insecurities, as actress Ann Sheridan suggested: "He was one of the wild characters of the world, but he also had a strange, quiet side. He camouflaged himself completely. In all the years I knew him, I never knew what really lay underneath, and I doubt if many people did." Flynn himself suggested that was the case, once saying, "I suppose most of us act all our lives. We have a facade, a front. We imagine ourselves to be what we're not, don't we?" While Flynn's adventurous lifestyle helped cast him in the mold of a 20th century Lord Byron, his quotes and lifestyle also hinted at a self-fulfilling prophecy that would prove destructive, and although he quickly found himself at the top of Hollywood, the same lifestyle that helped make him popular also took its toll on his health, work, and finances.

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errol flynn the actor: Errol Flynn James Turiello, 2012-04 Join me on this incredible journey of Errol Flynn's quest for an Oscar. Errol goes from complete obscurity to one of the most sought-after men in Hollywood. Men wanted to be him, women wanted to be with him. Errol on the other hand, wasn't particularly interested in acting. He was a cadet, an overseer at a copra plantation, he ran a charter schooner and he mined gold, to name only a few of his ventures all before the age of 21. He was a free spirit who played by his own rules, much to the chagrin of the Hollywood producers. He was up for any role and would play it so convincingly that it transported the viewer into another world. This book reminisces about the wonderful world of the motion picture experience in the 30's, 40's and 50's, when going to the movies was an event, where you would get a movie program and live organ music would fill the ornately decorated theater. We learn about the most loved man-of-the-people, Robin Hood, to the most audacious pirate in *The Seahawk*, to the bravest soldier as General Custer. You will be treated to over 200 photographs of Errol Flynn in his many movie roles, as well as, candid images most never before published. There are rare artwork posters from around the world, and some unique Errol Flynn items depicted you might not know exist. This book includes Errol Flynn's complete filmography with a short synopsis of each movie and the entire cast. Whether you are familiar with Errol Flynn and his body of work, or a newcomer, this book will definitely give you an insight into all the different aspects of his career in the movies. To quote Jack Warner of the famous Warner Brothers Studio, He was all the heroes in one magnificent, sexy, animal package...he showered an audience with sparks, when he laughed, when he fought, or when he loved. I just wish we had someone around today half as good as Flynn.

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