



# 15,000 MINUTES

She died 50 years ago, but **Marilyn Monroe** remains wildly alive and kicking in pop iconography. Now with Taschen's new limited-edition monograph, **Norman Mailer, Bert Stern: Marilyn Monroe**, never-before seen photographs of Hollywood's most tragic and enigmatic kid-in-the-picture keeps teasing us while whispering sweet sorrows into our collective ears. Here, a photo gallery and excerpt from the two great Monroe chroniclers.



A half-century after her death by pills, Norman Mailer's words come to mind. "So we think of Marilyn who was every man's love affair with America," the late novelist and New Journalist, who wrote *Marilyn* in 1973, once mused of the fleshy-lovable *Some Like It Hot* actress who lulled audiences and JFK into submission (and maybe far worse as the enduring rumors go). "Marilyn Monroe who was blonde and beautiful and had a sweet little rinky-dink of a voice and all the cleanliness of all the clean American backyards."

The girl next door, of course, never really was. Leave that to *Playboy* centerfolds. In Taschen's new coffee table book—recently printed in 1,962 copies signed by fabled shutterbug Bert Stern (and also available in a Collector's Edition of a scantily clad 125 copies)—readers and nostal-oglers will see the then-36-year-old quite nearly as intimately as ever before, stretch marks and all and older-but-just-as-sexier.

Equally intimately, readers will get full-page glimpses into Mailer's original manuscripts, cross-outs, circles and arrows, and add-ins too, in the big messy print. The two reportedly never "did it," so to speak, but there was a symbiotic relationship that was more indelible than most who collaborated with Norma Jean, neither in the photo studio or on the slab.

Gazing at these images, you can't ever really tell if she was just fronting, exhibiting, plain old happy, or all three. An enigma, she was. The book, conceived by Lawrence Schiller, exhibits pictures that

Stern was commissioned by *Vogue* to take only six weeks before her death. They were shot over three days at the similarly iconic Bel-Air Hotel. Veils and mesh screens are lifted—mystery, not all. One wonders if Monroe was drugged up by her own, with some of the images as revealing as someone lying alone in their bedroom on some natural, or chemically available, high.

Never a fan of Monroe, us, as we came from a different generation, somehow the Hollywood tragedy is encapsulated in the images, in one shapely woman, who was all woman—not like the "sticks" walking the runways of today.

And so, for a second look, we went back and appraised her few movies—not the near-campy *How to Marry a Millionaire* and *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, but *The Misfits* and *Giant*. And man, she was a giant.

Imagine, as Mailer did when he wrote of her marriage to baseball legend Joe DiMaggio: "The highest prize in a world of men is the most beautiful woman available on your arm and living there in her heart loyal to you."

No mercurial mad hatter fickle-ist like Liz Taylor, loyalist Marilyn Monroe made herself available, and intimate, and was candidly less "show" than incarnate. A real woman. Will ya' look at her on the following exclusive pages? Fifteen minutes of fame don't even touch her impact, her gravity, less stuffed toy than Mother temptress.

—S.G.