

Title Information

Pardon My Hearse

A Colorful Portrait of Where the Funeral and Entertainment Industries Met in Hollywood

by Allan Abbott and Greg Abbott

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Even celebrities die — and he was the man who picked up the bodies! Allan Abbott ran the leading mortuary in Hollywood and got an unprecedented glimpse of how celebrities really live and die. The Forrest Gump of the funeral industry, Abbott was everywhere celebrities died, from helping to prepare Marilyn Monroe's body to standing next to Christopher Walken at Natalie Wood's funeral.

Now in his new memoir *Pardon My Hearse*, Abbott tells the rags-to-shroud story of how he went from a young man with a hearse to the funeral director to the stars — a rollicking, unexpectedly hilarious story of glamorous funerals, mishaps with corpses and true-life glimpses of celebrities at their most revealing moments.

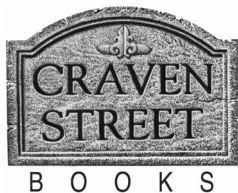
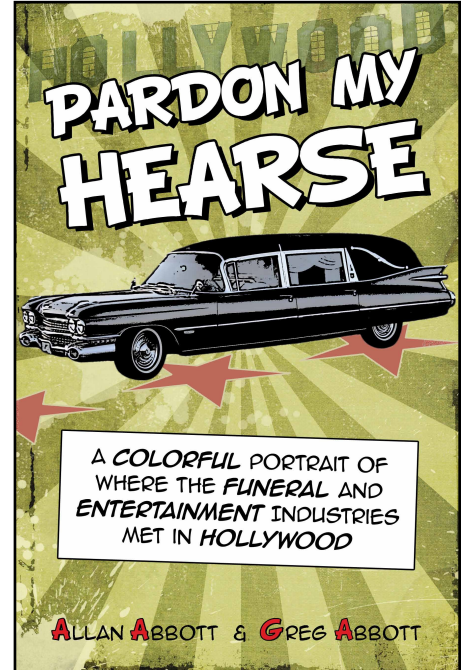
When he wasn't transporting celebrity corpses, Abbott used his funeral limos to transport living celebrities to Hollywood parties and rented his vast collection of cars and funeral props to movie and TV productions. *Pardon My Hearse* presents a dazzling A-List of celebrities, living and dead, whom Abbott encountered during his career, including Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, Joe DiMaggio, Robert Redford, Frank Sinatra and others.

Pardon My Hearse takes readers behind the scenes to tell the secrets of Marilyn Monroe's funeral (where Abbott acquired the most unlikely souvenir of Monroe's falsies) and dishes the inside story of disgraced crematorium operator David Sconce, who ordered an attack on Abbott's business partner Ron Hast to cover up Sconce's criminal mishandling of bodies and remains. Abbott also shares gruesome details of removing corpses from the devastation of the 1971 Sylmar earthquake, reburying corpses dislodged from the 1978 mudslide that swept through the Verdugo Hills Cemetery and more.

A treasure trove of insight and gossip you can't get anywhere else, *Pardon My Hearse* is an eye-opening look at secret Hollywood from the man who literally knows where the bodies are buried.

Audience: Celebrity gossip readers, pop culture readers, true crime readers.

About the Authors: Allan Abbott is the co-founder of Abbott & Hast Mortuary, Inc., Southern California's leading funeral service accommodation company. Abbott has participated in the funerals of numerous celebrities, including Marilyn Monroe, Natalie Wood, Clark Gable and Karen Carpenter. Greg Abbott is the former managing editor of Abbott & Hast Publications, producers of *Mortuary Management* magazine.



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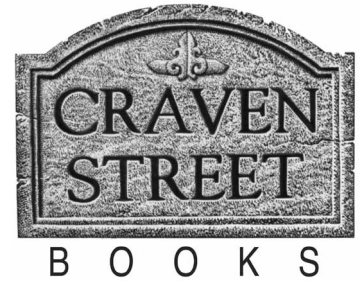
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New Hollywood tell-all *Pardon My Hearse* dishes on Marilyn Monroe's funeral, celebrity burials and the wild career of the funeral director to the stars

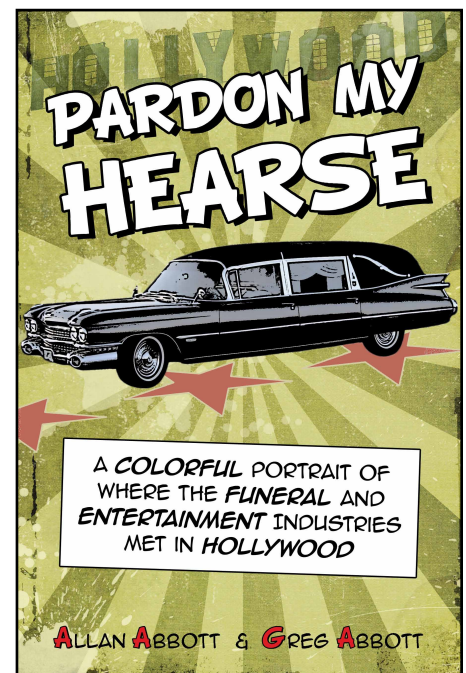
Even celebrities die—and he was the man who picked up the bodies! Allan Abbott ran the leading hearse, mortuary and funeral services company in Hollywood and got an unprecedented glimpse of how celebrities really live and die. The Forrest Gump of the funeral industry, Abbott was everywhere celebrities died, from helping to prepare Marilyn Monroe's body for burial to standing next to Christopher Walken at Natalie Wood's funeral.

Now Abbott tells the rags-to-shroud story of how he went from a young man with a hearse to the funeral director to the stars in his new memoir *Pardon My Hearse: A Colorful Portrait of Where the Funeral and Entertainment Industries Met in Hollywood* (Craven Street Books, June 15, 2015).

A rollicking and unexpectedly hilarious story, *Pardon My Hearse* recounts a remarkable career of glamorous funerals, encounters with corpses both comic and horrific, the surprisingly ruthless profession of undertaking and true-life glimpses of celebrities at their most revealing moments.

Abbott's career at the nexus of Hollywood and death put him at the center of some of the most somber events in entertainment history. *Pardon My Hearse* takes readers behind the scenes to tell the full story of Marilyn Monroe's funeral, with remarkable revelations, from the shocking state of Monroe's body before embalming to Joe DiMaggio's nighttime vigil — and how Abbott acquired the unlikely souvenir of Monroe's falsies.

Pardon My Hearse also gives a unique inside angle on the famous case of David Sconce, the disgraced Los Angeles crematorium owner who was sent to prison for his shocking mishandling of remains, including



indiscriminate simultaneous cremation of multiple bodies, selling body parts to medical supply companies, extracting dental gold from corpses — and ordering a brutal attack on Abbott’s business partner, Ron Hast.

Abbott didn’t just bury celebrities — he also worked with them living and up close. When he wasn’t transporting famous corpses, Abbott drove celebrities to Hollywood parties and rented his vast collection of limos and funeral props to movie and TV productions. (Abbott’s cars and equipment have appeared in over 300 movies, TV programs and commercials.) *Pardon My Hearse* presents a dazzling A-List of celebrities, living and dead, whom Abbott encountered during his career, including Richard Burton, Elizabeth Taylor, Joe DiMaggio, Robert Redford, David Niven, Frank Sinatra, Jack Lemmon, Peter Lorre and others.

Ride with Abbott and eavesdrop on the tense marriage of Dick and Liz Burton, as Abbott drives them from an “incognito” arrival at the San Bernardino train station. (Elizabeth Taylor: “I wonder where all the people are.” Richard Burton: “God damn it, woman, we went to all this trouble to not be seen and now you’re disappointed. I need a drink.”) Or take a trip with limo passenger Carly Simon, who complains that her boyfriend resents her new song, even though she assured him that it wasn’t about him.

Abbott’s career at the nexus of Hollywood and death put him at the center of some of the most bizarre events in Los Angeles history. *Pardon My Hearse* shares gruesome details of removing corpses from the devastation of the 1971 Sylmar earthquake, reburying corpses dislodged from the 1978 mudslide that swept through the Verdugo Hills Cemetery and more.

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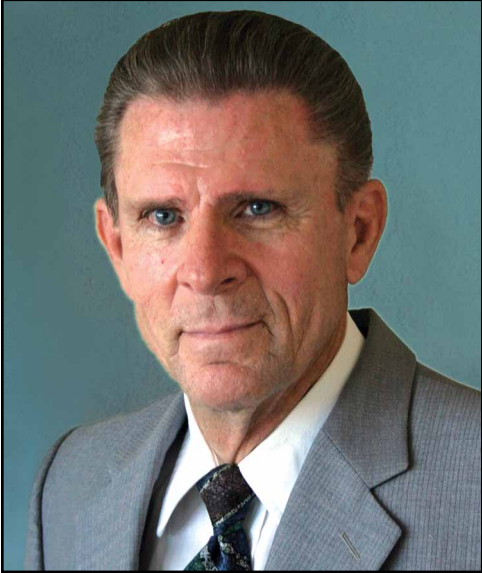
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About Allan Abbott

Co-Author of *Pardon My Hearse*



Allan Abbott grew up in Los Angeles amid great fear of an imminent air attack by the Japanese during World War II. In college he studied science to pursue a career in geology. He often visited areas in California known for their spectacular fossils and minerals, accompanied by his high school friend Ronald Hast. The adventurous pair slept uncomfortably in Allan's car until they purchased a hearse that Allan converted into a makeshift motor home to camp in.

In 1957, after Allan and Ron used their hearse to deliver flowers to cemeteries for the local funeral homes, a large mortuary chain gave them a contract to handle all of their death certificate work. Because of the great response by the mortuaries, they purchased some newer hearses and started renting them with trained drivers for funeral services. They also began offering body removal services both local and statewide. When Allan began converting station wagons to produce small hearses for their fleet, mortuaries statewide began purchasing these modified cars for themselves.

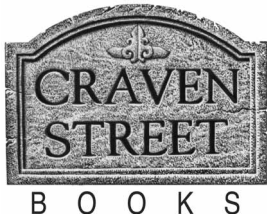
The Los Angeles Medical Examiner's Office began using their removal service to cover their overflow. After Allan and Ron broke the monopoly of the only three Los Angeles limousine services, they began getting orders to provide limousine service for the entertainment industry. When Playboy Limousine Service arrived on the scene, Abbott & Hast Company began doing their backup drives for many of Hollywood's brightest stars.

Allan became a distributor for funeral equipment produced by the largest company of its kind called Ferno-Washington and he began doing prototype testing for the company. He also made modifications to the hearses being produced by the five hearse manufacturers in Ohio, as well as Ford station wagons. Allan and Ron also designed the first airtray at the request of American Airlines to create a container to protect caskets being shipped by their airline.

When a law was enacted to allow scattering at sea of cremated ashes by plane, Abbott & Hast Company purchased a new aircraft and added this service to their repertoire. When another law permitted scatterings at sea by boat, the company purchased a yacht and offered the service to mortuaries across the country whose client families requested that service.

The company expanded from an accommodation service to a full service funeral home to the public as Abbott & Hast Colonial Mansion Mortuary. Allan and Ron also purchased a trade magazine called *Mortuary Management*, which they operated as an independent division called Abbott & Hast Publications. The company continued to expand when Allan opened Abbott & Hast Motion Picture Rentals with funeral cars and mortuary and cemetery props. It is the only company in the United States to offer all of these services.

Having worked on numerous celebrity funerals, most notably Marilyn Monroe's, Allan has been featured in several documentaries, as well as publications in the United States, Germany and Japan.



For more information on *Pardon My Hearse* (Craven Street Books, June 2015) or to arrange an interview with co-author **Allan Abbott**, please contact Jaguar Bennett at Craven Street Books, (800) 345-4447, Publicity@QuillDriverBooks.com.

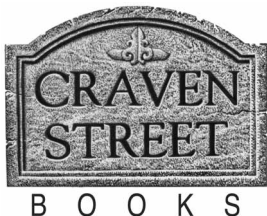
About Greg Abbott

Co-Author of *Pardon My Hearse*



Greg Abbott served for over a decade as managing director of Abbott & Hast Publications, publisher of *Mortuary Management* monthly magazine and *Funeral Monitor* weekly newsletter. He joined the company as news editor while still in high school and gradually took on more responsibilities until he managed the business. In total, Greg spent 22 years with the company before changing careers when the business was relocated outside of California. He has a degree in computer science and currently works in the property management field.

His passions include artwork, writing, photography and backpacking to remote locations with his wife. He is certified as a Wilderness First Responder and volunteers with the city of Monterey as an emergency responder.



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