

Young Hollywood
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We are a nation at war. It was not too long ago that America experienced a brutal attack on our own soil. However, we still look to Hollywood for a brief respite from the more serious topics on our minds. In fact, we seem to be infatuated with following the antics of the young people who dominate our televisions and the silver screen.

Although young Hollywood does not seem to be setting a very good example, I'm not exactly sure it's their fault. Fame and fortune has always put a lot of pressure on these young Hollywood types. We've seen it many times before, but it seems that there are two notable celebrities dominating the news these days who are having a particularly hard time handling their fame.

Both of their families have lived in the public eye for years. These two were born into show business and money. They should have been better prepared for a life of fame. Their parents should have spent a little more time and energy investing in their educations and a little less of their "pull" in getting them into successful Hollywood careers.

At the moment, neither is in jail, although we all know that there are continual struggles with drinking or drugs. Who knows when there might be long-term jail sentences, in-patient treatment, or maybe even injury or death due to impaired driving or the other reckless behavior that's slowly becoming the hallmark of their fame?

It's sad that their bodies have to be the center of their young identities. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate the human form as much as the next person, but they're under tremendous pressure to be musicians and actors and dancers and socialites. Why do they have to be sex symbols too? Why must they be so worried about being too fat or too thin? Recently there has been more interest in what you see when they get out of a car than in their talent.

When do they sleep? Do they ever take a break? I can't imagine the demands of their packed social calendars. They flit from club to club and party to party. There's too little sleep, too many drinks, and who knows how many flings and affairs. If there was as much energy spent keeping them healthy as there is energy spent keeping them out of legal trouble and keeping them constantly in the limelight, their problems would be much less intense.

I know that our children are watching young Hollywood. Our children are learning that you can survive and, at least financially, thrive by exploiting your natural talents, your body and your abilities. You can use sex and drugs as window dressings to a career in need of rejuvenation. You can hire Hollywood

doctors to prescribe away the pain and fatigue as soon as it comes. You can live your life in a fog and the money keeps rolling in.

The press isn't helping the situation. They'll photograph these kids around the clock. They can be eating breakfast, buying socks or simply walking into a café and there are photographers hiding in the bushes, waiting to catch them at their worst. Many of the photos are intentionally taken to be less than flattering. I suppose our society has some need to see Hollywood's prettiest people at their worst. It makes them a little more touchable and a little more real to us. It's our fault too. I mean we, the American people, embrace this circus and most of us secretly wish for fame and fortune.

We should all be concerned about the future of young Hollywood. Their on-again-off-again romances are brief and seem insincere, somehow. I'm worried that the drug and alcohol use will soon take too much of a toll on these young minds and bodies. I worry that someday we'll be reading about one of them dying, alone, in a London home due to an accidental drug overdose.

I guess we won't be surprised, though, nor do I think that we'll learn from their mistakes. After all, I'm writing about 1942; Japan recently attacked Pearl Harbor, and Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney aren't the first among young Hollywood to have these problems, nor will they be the last.