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Lawrence Schiller on His Marilyn Monroe

Nudes

— May 25, 2012 —

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Something's Got To Give, May 23, 1962 Photography Lawrence Schiller

"I had a meeting with Marilyn about what became these famous pictures of her beside the swimming pool, and she said: 'I'm thinking about jumping in a swimming pool with my bathing suit on but coming out with nothing on.' And her press agent Pat turned to her and said: 'You're not really going to do that Marilyn, are you?' She looked at me: 'If I do that and you publish these pictures all over the world, and I approve them, I don't want to see Elizabeth Taylor in the magazine the same week I am. I'm only getting \$100,000 from this picture, Elizabeth Taylor's getting a million dollars and I'm just as good an actress as she is.'

Marilyn felt she wasn't accepted for her talent. She felt that she wasn't valued. She would have given you all the wrinkles on her face to be Anna Magnani or Simone Signoret or to be Vanessa Redgrave but she wasn't that. They didn't give her Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf, they gave that to Liz Taylor. They didn't give Suddenly Last Summer to Marilyn Monroe, they gave that to Liz Taylor. So she tried to use the pictures, I think, as a way of gaining publicity to prove to the studio that she was as important as Elizabeth Taylor.

At the time of taking this photograph she was very frustrated, however she wanted to present an image to the world that didn't show that anger. This is an image for publicity. This is an image that says: 'I can be on the cover of magazines, I'm wanted by every single man in the world and I don't offend women. Women will come to watch me also.' That's why she's remembered 50 years later, because she never offended a woman. Everybody wanted to save her – if it was a divorce, if it was a miscarriage, whatever, you wanted to save her yourself. 'If I was there, I would have given her advice and this never would have happened.' You don't remember Jean Harlow, you don't today remember Marlene Dietrich – a great actress. There are other women that had the same sensuality that Marilyn did but you remember Marilyn because we wanted to save her from this tragedy.'

This month American director, author and photojournalist **Lawrence Schiller** is releasing the memoir **Marilyn & Me**, featuring Marilyn Monroe's last on-set shoot and many never-before-seen nude images. First photographing her in 1960 on the set of Let's Make Love, in 1962 – as part of an ongoing battle to get Fox to take her more seriously and out of jealousy of Taylor's success – Monroe devised the attention-grabbing plan to get Schiller to shoot her nude during the swimming pool scene of Something's Got to Give. Allowing Schiller an incredible opportunity at the tender age of 25 he famously said: "But Marilyn you're already famous. Now you're going to make me famous!" As this year marks the 50th anniversary of Monroe's death, Schiller's untold story and unseen images provide a uniquely intimate portrait of the icon and a revealing insight into her vulnerability in the months and days leading up to her tragic death.

Marilyn & Me: A Memoir in Words & Photographs by Lawrence Schiller is published by Taschen and out now. The exhibition Marilyn & Me is currently showing at Walton Fine Arts, London.

Text by Lucia Davies

Lucia Davies is junior editor of AnOther. She has also contributed to titles that include



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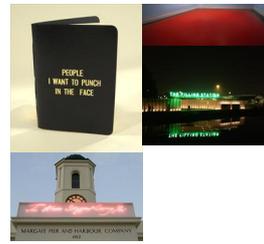
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