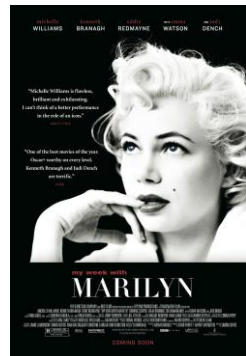


**FF2 Editor's Note:** Today Michelle Williams received a Spirit Award nomination in the “Best Female Lead” category for her work in *My Week with Marilyn*, conclusively putting to rest any doubts about whether or not this fine actress could tackle such an unlikely role. How can anyone but Marilyn Monroe capture the essence of this beloved film icon? And yet, Williams nails it.

When we saw *My Week with Marilyn* last month at our Chicago International Film Festival, we were so surprised that we turned to our friend Robert Samson, someone who has studied the Marilyn myth for years now in order to craft his screenplay *Roleplay*. Will Williams be nominated for an Oscar this year? All the handicappers say yes, and we know Samson, who calls Williams’ performance “riveting” agrees.



# My Marilyn

By Robert Samson  
Special for Films for Two®

Among the subtle charms of Newark, NJ in the Sixties, summer wasn't one of them, this being the time before air conditioners were really affordable, so every Memorial Day my parents packed-up the trunk of the Chevy and we headed north to the Catskills – Woodbourne, NY, a tiny hamlet on the Neversink River, where we “encamped” at a Jewish bungalow colony called Kassack's. My father would leave my mother, brother and me on Sunday evenings for his job as a paper salesman and come back on the weekends.

One particular day in August of 1962 – a Sunday -- stands out in my mind. I had finally managed to wear my mother down enough to part with a couple of dollars of her Mah Jong winnings (she took the game very seriously and rarely lost) so I could buy my favorite toy: A plastic rocket you filled with water and pumped-up with air, that just as often blew apart into pieces as shot up into the sky the way it was meant to.

Woodbourne consisted of a single two-lane blacktop, with shops on either side, that started at the rusty bridge over the river and gradually climbed to the movie theater at the other end on its way out of town to the prison. There were no televisions or telephones at Kassack's. (If someone wanted to call you they had to go through the main switchboard; they would page you over the loudspeaker. Since calls usually meant bad news, people would cringe if they heard their names called.) Lebed's drug store was our sole connection to the outside world.

My eyes were immediately riveted to the oversized headlines of *The National Enquirer* on the rack near the entrance: “Marilyn Dead at 36.” I stood there frozen. I was only twelve at the time – too young to have seen any of her pictures -- yet I felt like someone close to me had just died. My enthusiasm for the rocket drained away immediately. All I could do was turn around and shuffle back. I remember not wanting to talk to anyone right away, so I went down to the river.

To my great relief, none of the fishermen, stone skippers or tadpole collectors was there at the time. I sat under a tree whose branches hung out over the water, so overwhelmed with emotion it confused me. I never felt such grief when my grandparents died. How could I harbor such intense feelings for a woman I never knew, not even in her movies?



As the years passed and I did see her movies, the question of who Marilyn was to me lingered and grew deeper. But it was only after I had been a student of astrology for twenty-some-odd years and gained access to her birth chart that I found any insight. The birth chart is a map of the position of the planets at the exact time of birth. In many ways it is like a fingerprint; no two are exactly alike. Among the many things the natal chart can reveal, depending on the expertise of the practitioner, are the emotional and psychological issues a soul will grapple with over the course of a lifetime. Remarkably, it can also show “karmic connections” – indications that two souls have met before in another life. The indicators are extremely narrow: The two charts must have significant planets at the exact same degree as one another. Sure enough, such was the case between my chart and Marilyn’s. Studying her chart was like reading her diary, confirming what I sensed years ago.

So what was it about her, and why is her legend so enduring? Simply put, she embodied an emotional archetype we all can relate to: existential loneliness. (Asked by a therapist what was the first emotion I could recall, I replied, without hesitation, loneliness. Three-year-olds with decent parents aren’t supposed to know loneliness.) Marilyn’s childhood was an emotional desert. The details of her bio – Grandparents, Della and Otis Monroe, both with a history of mental illness; her mother Gladys, in and out of mental institutions; never knowing her biological father; in and out of orphanages, passed from one relative or neighbor (Wayne & Ida Bolender, where she was molested by a boarder, Murray Kimmel) to another – reveal how a fathomless pit of loneliness etched the character of the young Norma Jeane.

No doubt, many individuals experience the depths of despair Marilyn went through, but few possess the genius to be able to detach sufficiently to make art out of it. For most of her short life she could barely detach at all – explaining why she was constantly plagued with insomnia; and why Arthur Miller confessed, soon after they were married, that he felt as if she were devouring him, so deep was her need. When she was at her best, she had the capacity to make that terrible need a thing of beauty by seducing us into falling in love with her. Ironically, she found little satisfaction in sex. Always more

concerned with giving pleasure, sex was the gift she gave in exchange for the affection she so desperately needed.

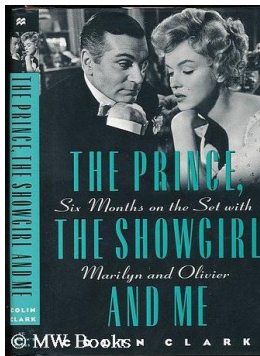
In the end, the vulnerability that enticed men to want to love her and women to take care of her became a prison. She created such a powerful persona, Hollywood could not afford for her to grow out of it. So in picture after picture they cast her as the “dumb blonde.” The problem was she was far from dumb; she had a nimble mind (why she had such superb comic timing) and a voracious intellect (why she grew bored of Joe DiMaggio and was later drawn to Arthur Miller).

My investigations into Marilyn’s life convinced me that her death was neither suicide nor murder, but tragic accident. There are indications of an accidental death in her chart on the day of her death. But there are also indications that she was emerging out of that tragic childhood into a more love-filled time in her life. We will never know.

Having just seen *My Week with Marilyn* – which I thought was remarkable for Michelle Williams’ riveting portrayal – I left the theater with the same melancholy feeling I have carried around with me since that day in the Catskills... That once upon a time I knew this sad, sweet woman and I miss her as much now as I did back then.

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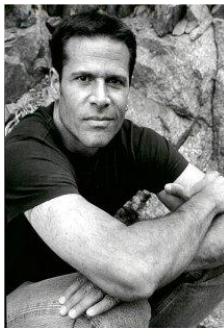
Original Cover

*My Week with Marilyn* is based on a memoir by Colin Clark originally called *The Prince, The Showgirl and Me: Six Months on the Set with Marilyn and Olivier*.

A new version is now available in paperback & on Kindle.



New Movie Tie-In



Robert Samson is currently promoting his screenplay, *Roleplay*, about a big-time, married actor who becomes the primary suspect when a provocative young actress, claiming to be the reincarnation of Marilyn Monroe, is brutally murdered.

Look for Samson on Facebook or visit his website:  
[www.SamsonStars.com](http://www.SamsonStars.com)