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# PETER POLACK

CAYMAN ISLANDS' LAWYER AND AUTHOR OF "JAMAICA LAND OF FILM"

Peter Polack was born in Jamaica in 1958 where he attended various schools including Jamaica College until 1972 when he went to Denstone College Boarding School in England. He is a proud graduate of the University of the West Indies and Norman Manley Law School. A criminal lawyer in the Cayman Islands since 1983, he resides there with his wife, two daughters and a granddaughter.

Experiences with youthful offenders led to the exhibit of his first work as an artist entitled *The Confinement Assemblage* now on permanent display at HM Prison Northward in the Cayman Islands.

He is the author of *Last Hot Battle of the Cold War* published by Casemate in 2013. He was a contributor to the *Encyclopedia of Warfare* recently published by Amber Books and his article, *Syria: The Evolution Revolution* was published in the U.S. Army John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center magazine. In 2014 he became a part time reporter for Reuters News Agency mainly reporting on the Cuban refugee crisis in the Cayman Islands.

In September 2016 Cambridge Scholars Publishing acquired the rights to publish *Jamaica Land of Film* the historical record of a century of film production in Jamaica for release in early 2017.



*The Confinement Assemblage*



## About "Jamaica Land Of Film"

by Peter Polack

If Jamaica were an actor she would have appeared in more than one hundred and forty-one films according to a popular internet database.

The list of movies where the name Jamaica plays a prominent part is probably closer to two hundred but this number pares down substantially if it is limited to those films that were actually shot in part or whole in Jamaica.

One of the most costly films for its time at US\$1 million was the 1916 Eastern fantasy, *A Daughter of the Gods*, that not only saw substantial set construction in Kingston at Fort Augusta, but one of the earliest examples of nudity by actress Annette Kellermann in mainstream cinema.

Jamaica was associated with at least one other first with *The Devil's Daughter* in 1939 being the first American black feature film shot on location in Jamaica.

Jamaica was sufficiently popular as a location to have several productions in one year such as *Live and Let Die* as well as *Papillon* in 1973. Jamaican based productions provided a few substantial opportunities for local actors over the decades pre-eminent among them being the beautiful Claudia Robinson in *Wide Sargasso Sea* who received popular acclaim in later reviews.

The popularity of earlier Jamaica location film productions were a consequence of low production

costs, close proximity to Florida, the availability of extras, many with prior experience from the frequent productions on island, and the exotic locale. The trend has sputtered in later years from competition by location countries prepared to offer a portion of financing and tax relief.

Some Jamaican location film productions that included local actors were:

*Manfish* (1956) - Jamaican Eric Coverley played police officer Chavez in in this production also called *Calypso* in the UK.

*Dr. No* (1962) with parts by Reggie Carter, Marguerite Lewars and the UK transplant Timothy Moxon.

*A High Wind in Jamaica* (1965) with Charles Hyatt

*Jamaican Gold* also *The Treasure Seekers* (1979) with Dermot Hussey and Bobby Ghisays

*The Mighty Quinn* (1989) with Carl Bradshaw

*Marked for Death* (1990) with Jimmy Cliff

*Prelude to a Kiss* (1992) with Peter Lloyd

*Belly* (1998) with Mr.Vegas (Clifford Smith) and Sean Paul (Sean Henriques)

*Shattered Image* (1998) with Leonie Forbes, Fay Ellington, Pablo Hoilett and Billy Wilmott

The prodigious output of films shot on location in Jamaica led the New York Times to proclaim Jamaica as; "An Island Rediscovered Its Role as the Little Hollywood Of the Caribbean" in a 1988 article. Jamaica later received the ultimate double accolade with portions of the 1963 original *The Lord of the Flies* and it's 1990 sequel being filmed on location in Portland.

There have been a few unfortunate occasions when productions such as *Island in the Sun*, shot in Barbados and Grenada during 1957, have been mistakenly attributed to Jamaica by even official sources. The Italian-produced *Our Man in Jamaica* appeared to not only have had no location in Jamaica but seemingly used some Haiti footage as background.

Jamaican themed films not shot on location also included *City Beneath the Sea* (1953) based on the book Port Royal: *The Ghost City Beneath the Sea*; *Jamaica Run* (1953); *Swashbuckler* (1976) Mexico; *Home Again* (2012) Trinidad.

This was a region-wide phenomenon with the recent blockbusters *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales* shot in Australia and *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides* using Hawaii.

At the end of the day however, many awards and medal we win on the international stage of music and athletics will be for naught unless they translate into jobs and improvement of our economy back home.

The Jamaican film location has accomplished just that for a century.



Actress Nina Mae McKinney on the set of "The Devil's Daughter" Kingston 1939



Dragon Bay, Portland location for "Cocktail" with Tom Cruise in 1988



Marilyn Monroe and writer husband Arthur Miller at Jamaica Inn 1957



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