

## Book Review: The Faron Young Story - Live Fast Love Hard By Diane Diekman

Faron Young was an anathema, he clocked over 80 Billboard hits, yet remains relatively unknown to all but an aging Country & Western fan base. Diane Diekman has done an outstanding job of recreating the life and times of Faron Young. Diane was a young fan, who later became a friend of the musician, and using this leverage, managed to get many of Faron's friends, associates, and even enemies to open up to her, to help create the book.

Faron was certainly a character, maybe the term 'hell raiser' would be appropriate when discussing him. Live Fast Love Hard is crammed with entertaining tales of derring do in the music world. Yet it is also one of the saddest books I have read in quite a while. Faron Young had a self destructive streak, a streak that seemed to exhibit itself at exactly the wrong time, and almost always aimed at some poor unsuspecting victim. From fellow band members, family, and even fans, at one time or another they all suffered.

Fame and fortune always come at a price, and Faron paid top dollar! Although a youngster he had made it in the country world by 1952, a regular on the Grand Ole Opry, records, and live performances, he was at the top of the game. Not even the call from Uncle Sam and a stint in the Army could dent the popularity of 'The Young Sheriff.' Unfortunately Faron has a predilection for booze, and even in these early days the signs were showing. Affable, 'give you the shirt off my back' Faron Young, would become a vindictive and sarcastic drunk.

It could be argued that Faron Young came right at the wrong time. The late 50's saw The Sheriff and his Deputies facing the 'pop' onslaught. Overnight Country seemed to have leprosy, the fans left in droves. This could have done little for Faron Young's state of mind. But he battled on through thick and thin. The band went through numerous line-up changes, but Faron kept it operating as a viable business.

The anecdotes that Diane Diekman has unearthed make for some great reading. My wife is a big country fan, and did a great job of filling in the gaps that I had. For example, one of Faron Young's favorite drinking and fighting buddies was George 'No Show' Jones, Jan explained that the nickname came from his habit of getting drunk and just not turning up at the concert hall! Another of Faron's favorite people was Patsy Cline, the friendship apparently was based on the fact that Patsy's language was just as bad as Faron's.

Infidelity, depression, and drunkenness represent one side of his character, yes charisma, and kindness, even, or may be most importantly, kindness to strangers, represent the softer, gentler, and very compassionate side.

Faron Young may have had his failings, but he was a man who had high principals, he refused to play the accepted payola game of buying his way to number 1 through Billboard ads, a move that likely did little to endear himself with the record labels, and indeed might be a contributing factor as to why the major labels treated him so shabbily when it came to promotion.

It was a bitter and sad man that finally retired from music. The years of hell raising had taken a toll on his body, his mind, and his friends. And it was a very depressed man that ended it all on December 9 1996.

For those of you that are not as 'old as dirt' (like me) and do not know who Faron Young was, I have found a couple of video clips online at YouTube. Hello Walls was likely his calling card, and a song that he played for many years. It's Four In The Morning was another huge hit.

You can pick up your own copy of The Faron Young Story - Live Fast Love Hard by Diane Diekman from Amazon.

(Originally published at Blogger News Network and reprinted with permission of the author, Simon Barrett).

### About the Author

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