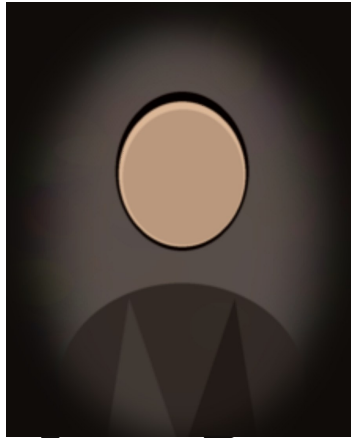




James Dean

February 8, 1931 - September 30, 1955

Cholame, California

James Byron Dean - American actor whose brief, blazing screen career fixed restless youth into a permanent national myth - died near Cholame, California, on September 30, 1955. He was twenty-four. Born February 8, 1931, in Marion, Indiana, he grew up between Indiana farms and California classrooms, studied theater, and carried a Midwestern intensity into New York stages before Hollywood claimed him for three films that still feel unfinished by design.

East of Eden (1955) introduced him as Cal Trask, a son hungry for a father's approval. Rebel Without a Cause made a red jacket and a hillside observatory into shorthand for teenage fury and tenderness. Giant, released after his death, stretched him into ranch country and adult ambition. He worked as if every take were a dare, improvising emotion the camera could barely keep up with. Off set he raced cars, collected records, and lived as if time were a currency he intended to spend loudly.

On U.S. Route 466 near Cholame, his Porsche collided with another car as he drove toward a race in Salinas. He died of his injuries. The wreck made him iconic before the public had finished learning his name.

Indiana taught him work and weather; Hollywood taught him how quickly a face can become a symbol. He left fewer performances than most character actors, and somehow enough.

He died near Cholame on September 30, 1955. Somewhere a young driver is still checking the mirror, believing the road will wait.

Dean's gift was concentrated vulnerability - making rebellion look like a plea. Notice Nearby keeps the death date so September 30 remembers the Indiana-born actor who made American youth look like it had somewhere urgent to go.

Services

Died near Cholame, California, September 30, 1955. Actor; East of Eden; Rebel Without a Cause; Giant; posthumous Academy Award nominations.

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