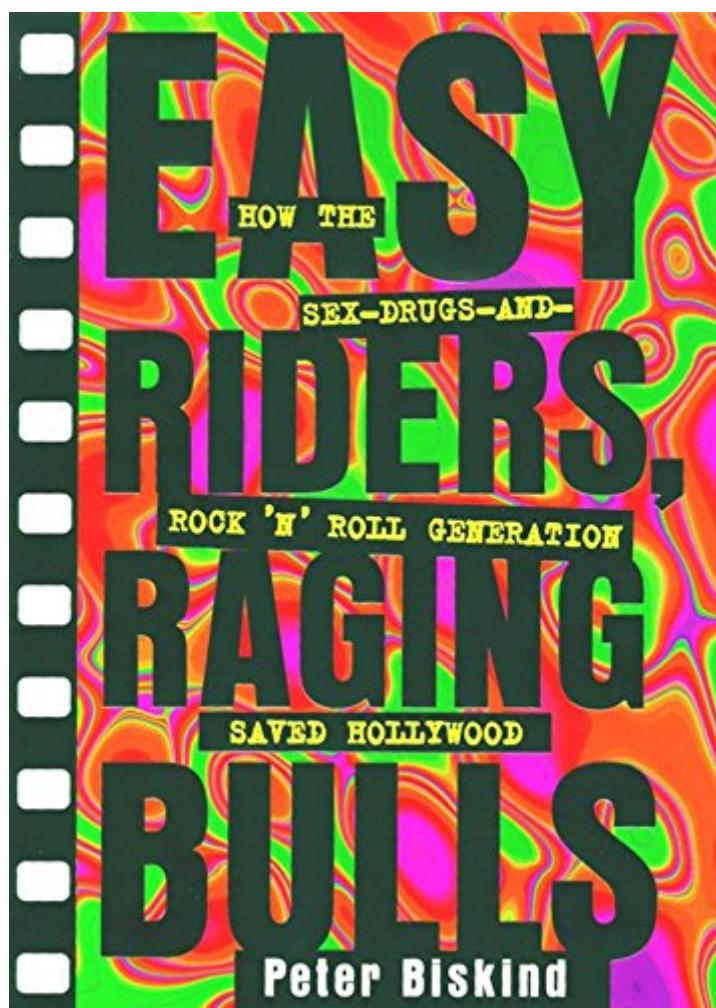


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Easy Riders Raging Bulls: How The Sex-Drugs-And Rock 'N Roll Generation Save



Synopsis

In 1969, a low-budget biker movie, *Easy Rider*, shocked Hollywood with its stunning success. An unabashed celebration of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll (onscreen and off), *Easy Rider* heralded a heady decade in which a rebellious wave of talented young filmmakers invigorated the movie industry. In *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls*, Peter Biskind takes us on the wild ride that was Hollywood in the '70s, an era that produced such modern classics as *The Godfather*, *Chinatown*, *Shampoo*, *Nashville*, *Taxi Driver*, and *Jaws*. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* vividly chronicles the exuberance and excess of the times: the startling success of *Easy Rider* and the equally alarming circumstances under which it was made, with drugs, booze, and violent rivalry between costars Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda dominating the set; how a small production company named BBS became the guiding spirit of the youth rebellion in Hollywood and how, along the way, some of its executives helped smuggle Huey Newton out of the country; how director Hal Ashby was busted for drugs and thrown in jail in Toronto; why Martin Scorsese attended the Academy Awards with an FBI escort when *Taxi Driver* was nominated; how George Lucas, gripped by anxiety, compulsively cut off his own hair while writing *Star Wars*, how a modest house on Nicholas Beach occupied by actresses Margot Kidder and Jennifer Salt became the unofficial headquarters for the New Hollywood; how Billy Friedkin tried to humiliate Paramount boss Barry Diller; and how screenwriter/director Paul Schrader played Russian roulette in his hot tub. It was a time when an "anything goes" experimentation prevailed both on the screen and off. After the success of *Easy Rider*, young film-school graduates suddenly found themselves in demand, and directors such as Francis Coppola, Peter Bogdanovich, George Lucas, and Martin Scorsese became powerful figures. Even the new generation of film stars -- Nicholson, De Niro, Hoffman, Pacino, and Dunaway -- seemed a breed apart from the traditional Hollywood actors. Ironically, the renaissance would come to an end with *Jaws* and *Star Wars*, hugely successful films that would create a blockbuster mentality and crush innovation. Based on hundreds of interviews with the directors themselves, producers, stars, agents, writers, studio executives, spouses, and ex-spouses, this is the full, candid story of Hollywood's last golden age. Never before have so many celebrities talked so frankly about one another and about the drugs, sex, and money that made so many of them crash and burn. By turns hilarious and shocking, *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* is the ultimate behind-the-scenes account of Hollywood at work and play.

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Customer Reviews

In the 1970s not only did the patients get to run the asylum known as Hollywood, most were children, if not in age certainly in temperament. The youth of America got to make the movies they wanted to make and see. Some of these young people were genuinely talented, others not quite, but they forever destroyed the old studio system and cleared the fetid air. This is a page-turning record of the self-indulgent personalities who did it and how they did it. Not many rate at first-rate human beings. Few made films that will pass the test of time. But this book describes a defining moment in American life, not only culturally but socially. A must read for anyone interested in the American experience.

This book was a fast and enjoyable read. Peter Biskind is able to shed light on the personal lives of the stars that were involved in the cinematic upheaval that was the New Hollywood movement. The book focuses on those directors and producers that helped usher in a new era of Hollywood films that were considered rebellious and daring in their production and subject matter. Today, names like Coppola, Scorsese, and Spielberg are common household names, yet they had their start by causing a stir in Hollywood by rallying against the established system. Most of this book covers the

time period between the early 1960's through the 1980's. It discusses how the new hippie mindset and sheer debauchery of the time contributed to some of the greatest films ever made. Biskind is able to transform what could have been a by-the-numbers academic study of a tumultuous period in the industry and paints it in a narrative fashion that is able to give us a glimpse into the mind of these filmmakers and producers who were not just shucking the conventions of their time but turning the established Hollywood system on its head. I highly recommend this book for anyone with a passing interest in films or this specific period of film making. You will not be disappointed.

First, a huge congratulations to the author, Peter Biskind, whose passion and detail-orientation was so evident and in the end gave a rich and insightful look at the transition (rise) of Hollywood from the 60's to 70's and transition (fall) from the '70's to 80's. Biskind, while trying to make the book as salacious as possible (hence the sub-title) indeed intimates that the sex and drug issues were not necessarily core to the stories of the directors and movies but instead "rewards of success" in some cases and "creative fuel" in others. In both instances, it was the result of young directors struggling with the freedom in autonomy in the early days, frustration of Hollywood dependency in the later days and the megalomania that came from fame. Overall it was a fun read, from the vantage point of an appreciator of film, to just loving movie gossip. As enjoyable as it was, I wish it served a higher purpose. That is, the era written about was a true golden age in movie making - both in the US and abroad - and I would have liked even more insight into why. Biskind focuses the book on some of the most important directors of the time - notably and obviously Coppola, Lucas, Spielberg, Scorsese and Ashby - spends way too much time on Dennis Hopper (who can blame him - he was a train wreck) and Warren Beatty and yet virtually ignores Woody Allen (who directed more movies, and some great ones at that, than any of the aforementioned directors), Stanley Kubrick, Sidney Lumet, John Schlesinger and Louis Malle all of whom directed some of the best movies in that era, let alone of all time. What was their contribution? What traits did they share with the featured directors? Perhaps their personal stories weren't as intriguing (not enough sex, drugs or violence), but their art was beautiful and helped make that particular age be golden. Finally, can someone finally tell me why Harvey Keitel was fired from *Apocalypse Now*???

Grab you by the seat of your pants account of the directors' heyday from *Easy Rider* to *Heaven's Gate*. The author managed to get all the insiders to share their stories and their thoughts about themselves and the industry. Intelligent, funny, poignant and masterful at tracing the arc of film from independence to corporate thinking. I could not put it down.

Absolutely loved it. This book is from the era of my formative years. The late sixties and the seventies. Sex, drugs and rock & roll. It was amazing to read the beginnings of some of the most creative minds in movie entertainment. You will read the excesses, triumphs, fears and failures of the so-called New Hollywood era. A MUST READ as the new generation fought the studios for more control of their films.

I feel like I need to check into rehab after having read this book! A motley collection of aspiring and idealistic young filmmakers band together in support of each other and with dreams of creating art. A little fame, money, and success gets tossed in later on, and all Heck breaks loose: egos and pettiness surface, neuroses flare up, sex and drugs become the currency of the day, fortunes are won and lost and won again (and lost again), and the cooperative spirit dies an ugly death. Rather than spoil it for you by recounting specifics, I'll just say this business can bring out the worst in people and it certainly did in the case of many of the principals featured in "ER, RB". But it makes for a juicy read, that's for DARN sure! And I'd bet dollars to doughnuts that what is recounted in this book is really just the tip of the iceberg. This book is a hybrid of all types of information -- historical record, oral histories, and a more than a little bit of gossip rag thrown in for prurient pleasure. Ideally this book would be just volume one in a long series. But I was thoroughly entertained by what Biskind did uncover. If you hold some high-profile film directors (Spielberg, Lucas, Altman, Bogdanovich, Coppola, Scorsese, etc.) in somewhat high esteem for their contributions to film, you may find that your opinions might change somewhat. But learning WHY will be a fun read.

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