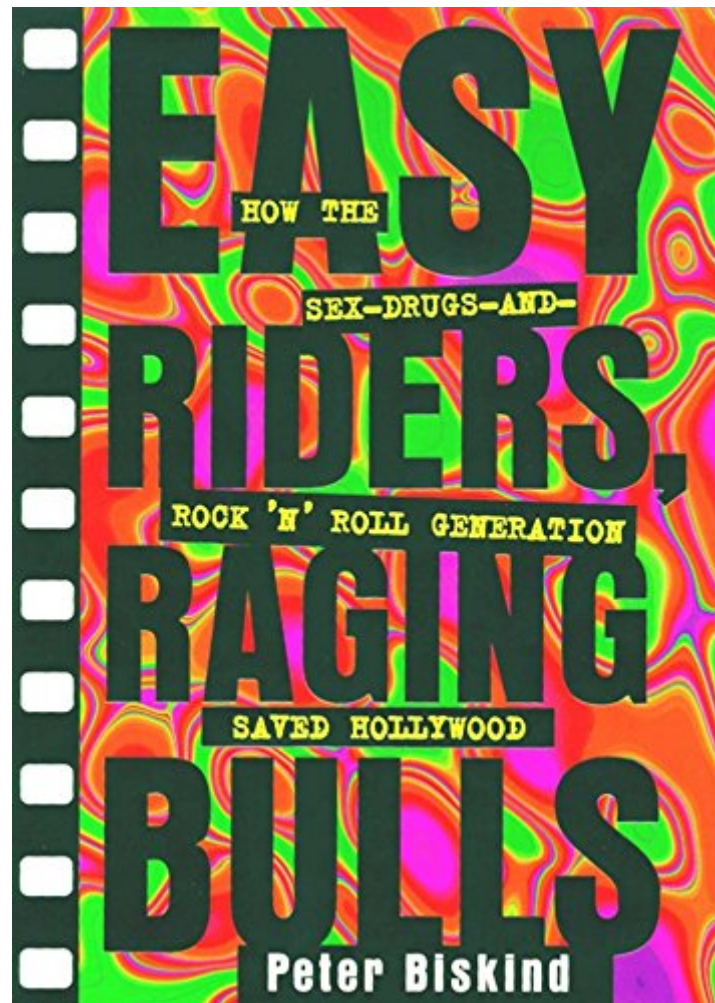


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Easy Riders Raging Bulls: How The Sex-Drugs-And Rock 'N Roll Generation Save



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

This book is a terrific read: an amazingly revealing insight into the workings of the Hollywood machine and a convincing explanation of why the film industry is the way it is today. Fascinating for any film fan but truly essential for those particularly interested in Coppola, Scorsese, Altman and the other enfants terribles of the 70s. I learned more than I ever thought I would about the strange habits, curious peccadilloes and psychological frailties of these legendary directors and producers. Seminal figures such as Dennis Hopper, William Friedkin, Peter Bogdanovich and Scorsese all come across as frighteningly deranged, emphasising the fine line that separates genius from insanity - and many of these characters clearly ended up on the wrong side of the divide. One of Biskind's great strengths is that he seeks to portray all sides of the story, and it's hard not to believe the majority of what is reported simply for the fact that if wasn't true you can bet your life that lawsuits would have stopped publication in its tracks. The spirit of the times engendered by the rise of the anti-Vietnam, hippy counterculture, generated a climate where a new form of creativity was allowed to enter the mainstream for the first time. This produced a fabulous glut of films - Bonnie and Clyde, The Godfather, The Exorcist, Taxi Driver, The Deerhunter, Star Wars, MASH and dozens of others. Biskind's belief is that the rise of the super director destroyed this astounding period in Hollywood history - egos and pay checks became so over inflated that eventually the

studios realised that they had to seize back control.

Good Lord, is this book overrated? Peter Biskind's *EASY RIDERS, RAGING BULLS* is a perfect example on how NOT to write about movie history. In this case, it's the period between 1968-1980; a decade when directors like Spielberg, Scorsese, Altman and Coppola became powerful figures in the movie industry, releasing classics like "Jaws" (1975), "Taxi Driver" (1976), "Nashville" (1975) and "The Godfather" (1972). Biskind makes an effort to comprehend the entire decade in the span of 430-435 pages and fails miserably. Throughout the entire book, Biskind makes one flawed argument after another, making generalizations about the state of movies by focusing on only a small section of what was released at the time. For instance, Biskind makes a romantic hyperbole that the movies of the 1970s became successful because audiences were part of the Cahiers du Cinema crowd that desired for watch tougher and more challenging fare. Wrong. As David A. Cook's terrific book, *LOST ILLUSIONS*, illustrates, the top stars of that decade were not method actors like Al Pacino, Dustin Hoffman or Robert De Niro, but action heroes like Burt Reynolds, Clint Eastwood, Sylvester Stallone and Robert Redford. Some of the most successful movies of that decade were not artistic statements like "McCabe & Mrs. Miller" (1971) or "Amarcord" (1974), but movies that were either modeled after the exploitation circuit ("The Texas Chainsaw Massacre"; "The Rocky Horror Picture Show"; "The Omen"; "The Exorcist"), star-studded Hollywood epics ("Airport"; "The Poseidon Adventure"; "Earthquake"; "The Towering Inferno") or violent action movies ("The Godfather"; "Death Wish"; "Deliverance"; "Billy Jack"; "The Getaway"; the Dirty Harry and James Bond movies). Sensation, not artistry, was the rule, then as now.

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