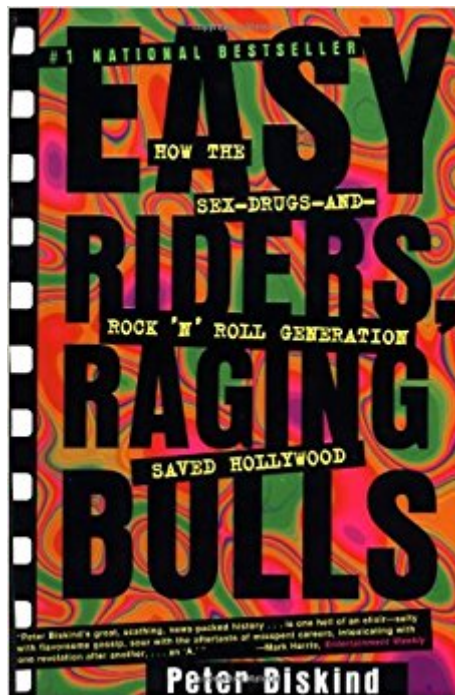




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Easy Riders, Raging Bulls: How The Sex-Drugs-and-Rock 'N' Roll Generation Saved Hollywood



Synopsis

When the low-budget biker movie *Easy Rider* shocked Hollywood with its success in 1969, a new Hollywood era was born. This was an age when talented young filmmakers such as Scorsese, Coppola, and Spielberg, along with a new breed of actors, including De Niro, Pacino, and Nicholson, became the powerful figures who would make such modern classics as *The Godfather*, *Chinatown*, *Taxi Driver*, and *Jaws*. *Easy Riders, Raging Bulls* follows the wild ride that was Hollywood in the '70s -- an unabashed celebration of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll (both onscreen and off) and a climate where innovation and experimentation reigned supreme. 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. MARTIN SCORSESE ON DRUGS: "I did a lot of drugs because I wanted to do a lot, I wanted to push all the way to the very very end, and see if I could die." DENNIS HOPPER ON EASY RIDER: "The cocaine problem in the United States is really because of me. There was no cocaine before *Easy Rider* on the street. After *Easy Rider*, it was everywhere." GEORGE LUCAS ON STAR WARS: "Popcorn pictures have always ruled. Why do people go see them? Why is the public so stupid? That's not my fault."

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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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