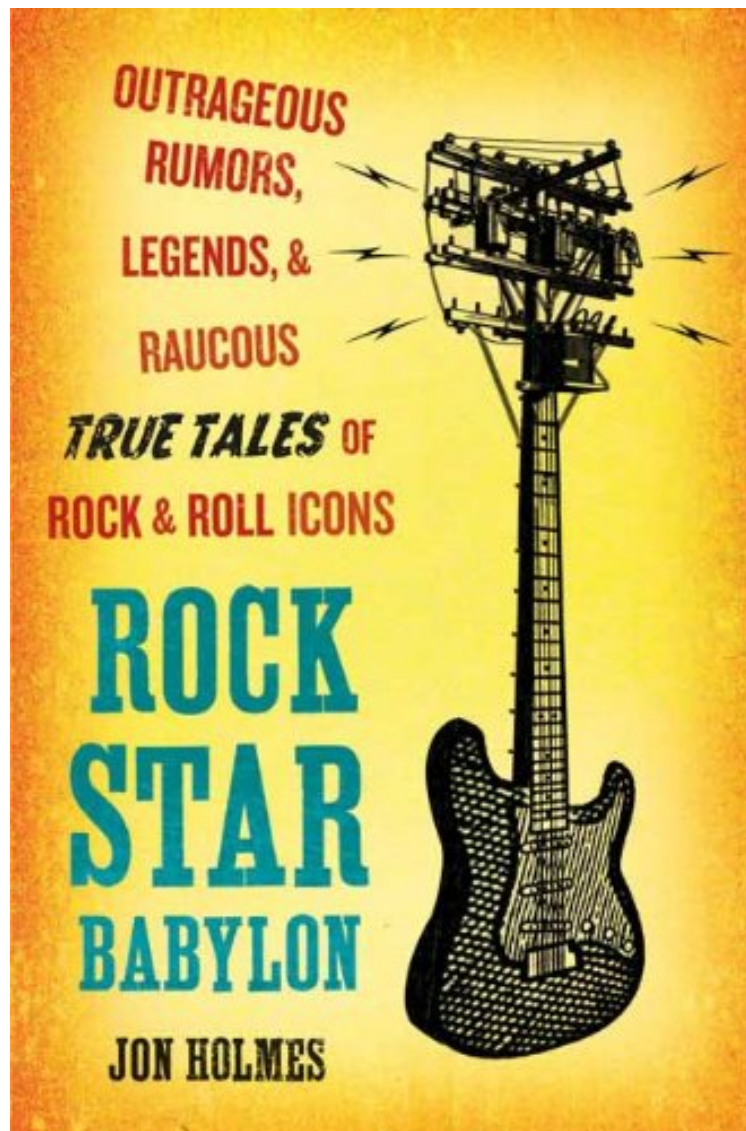


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## Rock Star Babylon: Outrageous Rumors, Legends, and Raucous True Tales of Rock and Roll Icons

*Jon Holmes*

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**Jon Holmes : Rock Star Babylon: Outrageous Rumors, Legends, and Raucous True Tales of Rock and Roll Icons** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rock Star Babylon: Outrageous Rumors, Legends, and Raucous True Tales of Rock and Roll Icons:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Not all that great...By M. WarnockIf you are more familiar with

bands from ENGLAND - you'd appreciate this one. A few good tidbits here and there, but I just didn't care for the style of writing and wished I knew ahead of time it was written by an English author and he'd concentrate mostly on his side of the Atlantic!

2 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Rock stars behaving badly

By E. A. Solinas

It's a given fact (much like Jane Austen's line about a single man et cetera) that rock stars not only behave badly, but that they always have done so. And over a half century or so, rock'n'rollers have acquired a large number of crazy rumors, stories, and anecdotes. But despite its name, "Rock Star Babylon: Outrageous Rumors, Legends, and Raucous True Tales of Rock and Roll Icons" is not raucous or outrageous -- while a few stories are worthy of rock'n'roll outrageousness, Jon Holmes mostly dredges up the old or unoutrageous stories in insistently unfunny prose. It opens with a tale of a kangaroo hit by a band bus, which these sensitive musicians then dressed in a jacket and sunglasses, and took pictures with it. Too bad the kangaroo wasn't QUITE dead (it's getting better!), and went hopping off into the outback with the ignition keys in its pocket. Ah, karma, how sweet thou art. And then we've got lots of other stories (some untrue) -- the stomach-full-of-semen one, a pop star's racist attack, a testicle testimony, over-the-top parties, seminude bonfire dances, airborne musical effects, the legendary "Mars Bar" story, a church filled with pigs, a German interviewer's "seizure," little people with headtrays of cocaine, a HIV message carved into a torso, and many other bizarre and sometimes grotesque little stories. And they range in focus from the Rolling Stones to Damon Albarn to some pop stars I've never heard of. In theory, any book called "Rock Star Babylon" should have some really outrageous, juicy stories in it, or at least produce some that haven't been heard many times before. And there are some horrendously funny stories from time to time, such as a story about Ozzy Osbourne's attempt to film a music video in a pig-filled church, only to have the music, erm, startle the pigs, causing them to defecate in said church. Call it a divine message. Unfortunately despite a wealth of grotesque and shocking rock'n'roll material, Jon Holmes only produces a few of those throughout the entire book -- most of the truly shocking and/or outrageous stuff he covers in this book is stuff that is already pretty well-known, such as Led Zeppelin's "red snapper" story or the "Stevie Nicks has cocaine blown up her butt" legend. Well, those are the shocking ones -- the ones heard before. Most of them are frankly very UN-shocking. Yes, it's obnoxious that Keith Richards wouldn't go onstage without a shepherd's pie beforehand, but it's not exactly "outrageous." How is it a rock star story that a bunch of guys were watching Damon Albarn's girlfriend changing her clothes? HE didn't do anything. And why are disastrous concept albums, experiments and concerts considered "outrageous?" Ridiculous, yes, but not outrageous. It doesn't help that Jon Holmes appears to be acutely aware of the flimsiness of his material, because he stretches it thin with lots of not-very-interesting personal anecdotes and heavy footnoting. And though he's apparently a comedian, his shrill humor wears thin after about twenty-five pages -- oh look, jokes about dumb Americans and pervert priests, as well as half-forgotten British celebs like Charlotte Church. How droll and witty.

"Rock Star Babylon: Outrageous Rumors, Legends, and Raucous True Tales of Rock and Roll Icons" had more than enough material to live up to its name, but Jon Holmes' poor selections and yawnworthy writing make this more of a "Rock Star Retirement Home."

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Annoying. Not very original. Disappointing.

By Big Beat

Reading this book is like suffering through a bad set of "take my wife... please" jokes told by an annoying amateur comedian. You've heard 90% of these stories before, and they're all delivered with an obnoxious elbow-in-the-ribs, nudge-nudge-wink-wink style that gets tired very quickly. There are a couple of chuckles in there, but they are all due to the humor of the original events being described and are funny rather despite the author than due to any effort of his in relating them. A good collection of such rock roll anecdotes is long overdue, but this isn't it.

Rockers Behaving Badly

From Ozzy Osbourne to Chuck Berry, Courtney Love to Keith Moon, Rock Star Babylon has gathered together the most outrageous antics and diva-esque misbehavior in the annals of rock. Here in a single volume are the most wickedly entertaining stories of over-the-top parties, crazy divorces, hidden cameras, trashed hotel rooms, misapplied epileptic interventions, and innocent headless bats. Running the gamut from the rude to the ridiculous, these reports of rock-and-rollers at their worst come straight from the mouths of those who were there or those who were there but left early and heard about it afterward. Fun, shocking, and compulsively readable, Rock Star Babylon is a guilty pleasure for fans everywhere.

From Publishers Weekly

This compilation of wild, salacious rock 'n' roll debauchery stories, most of which may or may not be true, probably seemed like a good idea at the time. But in the hands of British writer and comedian Holmes, it's a self-aggrandizing mess that's to be endured more than enjoyed. With smug self-satisfaction, Holmes blithely relates tales of rock excess, many of which have already made the rounds: the infamous Van Halen rider that stipulated no brown M&Ms backstage, Stevie Nicks's bottoms-up delivery system for cocaine and a fair number of non-events like KISS's inclusion of band members' blood in the ink of their 1970s comic book. Holmes goes from bad to worse by padding the book with pointless footnotes that lean heavily on U.K. references and add nothing to the narrative. Perhaps worst of all, most of the stories (except for the most famous, which were already verified by others--i.e., "As Ozzy told Rolling Stone") have not been fact-checked, leaving it up to the reader to determine their veracity. The result is frustrating, unfunny and often pointless. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed

Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist Holmes limns a series of brief tableaux of rock n roll excess in the manner of Kenneth Anger in his magnum opus of silver-screen sleaze, Hollywood Babylon (1959), which, of course, the title of Holmes tome references. As far as explicitness in rockin tales of naughtiness, Holmes is on a par with lad mags like FM rather than Penthouse, but he makes his points, as when he notes that Bob Geldof couldnt have killed his ex-wifes paramour (Michael Hutchence of INXS), partly because, given Geldofs level of uncleanness, hed have left DNA and strands of hair at the scene; this tags the end of some moderately snarky conjecture as to whether the late Hutchence checked out as a result of an act of autoerotic activity . . . gone horribly wrong. With plenty of other verbal felicities such as the footnote about spousal slagging off that describes Marvin Gaye as in many ways the original Eminem, its obvious that this is a must-have pop-music and trash-culture gemrough-cut, of course. --Mike Tribby  
aClever but warped. a "The Sunday Times" (London) aJon Holmes is a genius. a "Heat"?Clever but warped.? ?"The Sunday Times" (London) ?Jon Holmes is a genius.? ?"Heat"