



Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers: The Rise of Motörhead

Martin Popoff

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Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers: The Rise of Motörhead is the first book to celebrate the classic-era Motörhead lineup of Lemmy Kilmister, “Fast” Eddie Clarke, and Phil “Philthy Animal” Taylor. Through interviews with all of the principal troublemakers, Martin Popoff celebrates the formation of the band and the records that made them legends: *Motörhead*, *Overkill*, *Bomber*, *Ace of Spades*, *No Sleep 'til Hammersmith*, and *Iron Fist*. An in-depth coda brings the story up to date with the shocking recent deaths of Taylor and Kilmister.

Motörhead comes to life in this book as bad-luck bad boys — doused in drink and drugs, most notably speed — incapable of running their lives right, save for Fast Eddie, who is charged with holding things together. Popoff also examines the heady climate of music through the band’s rise to prominence during the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, with detailed reflection on Motörhead’s unique position in the scene as both originators and embattled survivors who carried on the renegade spirit of those times.

Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers: The Rise of Motörhead Details

Date : Published May 16th 2017 by ECW Press

ISBN : 9781770413474

Author : Martin Popoff

Format : Paperback 360 pages

Genre : Music, Biography, Nonfiction

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From Reader Review *Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers: The Rise of Motörhead* for online ebook

Kathleen says

They are Motörhead and they play rock & roll

I became a Motörhead fan within the last decade, so I didn't know much about the classic lineup that is the focus of this book. I have seen the "Classic Albums" documentary about Ace of Spades. I knew more about Lemmy and saw him live with Motörhead in 2012. I really enjoyed and appreciated Lemmy's sense of humor, general shamelessness, candor, and personification of rock & roll.

If most people read book reviews to help them decide if they should read the book, that makes this particular task very hard with *Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers*. It is part oral history of the band, part rock & roll reminiscing, part music theory, part sociology, and part eulogy for the gone but not forgotten Lemmy Kilmister and Phil Taylor, both of whom passed away in 2015 as the author was working on this book. Die-hard fans of the band will surely love the book. I enjoyed it, as I enjoy most things involving Lemmy, because it got me listening to the old songs, and looking on YouTube for live videos, particularly showing the Bomber plane they built for their live show that I never had the pleasure of seeing in person. The author dives into details on some deep tracks that I wasn't familiar with, and there's a somewhat tedious discussion of trying to categorize the band as heavy metal, or punk, or whatever other ways the band has been described. It became tedious, even though Lemmy seems to be the one who isn't comfortable with the label of heavy metal, but most Motörhead fans don't give a damn about labels anyway and I'm not sure a casual reader would find it captivating, either. I'm not sure how any of this book goes over with someone unfamiliar with Motörhead. Maybe watching the Lemmy documentary is a good place to start to give you an idea of the force of personality behind Motörhead.

Thank you to Netgalley and ECW Press for granting my request for an advance copy of this book for review. I'm glad I read the book and I'm very glad that I had the opportunity to see Motörhead live in Lemmy's lifetime. They are truly one of a kind.

Doug says

It is far from a definitive history of Motorhead, but it is interesting to hear from the people involved and get their perspectives as the book is largely a compilation of interviews. These perspectives often vary significantly. Lemmy feels under represented and I wonder how much he cooperated with the writer of this book. Fast Eddie definitely seemed to have an agenda at times. The organizational structure of the book is a bit wonky at times and tends to go off on tangents a lot. Overall, I feel it is an interesting oral history of the original Motorhead lineup that is sadly no longer with us. Despite its flaws, I enjoyed it a lot.

JAnn Bowers says

A fan of the 80's metal and hairbands I truly enjoyed this read about Motorhead and its beginning and the

days that made them larger than life and the hell they caused on the music scene with their lyrics and vocals alone could easily raised the dead from the grave. Lemmy was the best lead singer to the rock scene. Greatly missed by fans!

I received this book through NetGalley for an honest review.

Christopher says

Poorly written, poorly edited; someone was asleep at the wheel on this one. Sadly it seems like the definitive Motör-story will never be written.

The Brazen Bull says

The one Motörhead song that everybody knows is “Ace of Spades” and this is the line-up power trio that created it. The early days of what has been a forty year wall of sound are as expected: drinking, fighting, speed, but anyone even casually familiar with the band will find no surprises...

Click the link below to read the full review.

<http://thebrazenbull.com/books/beer-d...>

Neil Sarver says

I felt the need to push this one to the top of my reading after the unexpected passing of "Fast" Eddie Clarke. On that level it was satisfying, as Clarke is by far the leading voice in telling the story as reported here.

The author, Popoff, gives a kind of "The lady doth protest too much, methinks" introduction in which he insists this book was already in development when "Philthy Animal" and Lemmy passed away and is not a cash in on those deaths. I don't mean to suggest that's not accurate to the word, but it also seems very much to have been rushed without nearly enough attention to the flow by either Popoff or his editors.

It's too bad, because the story of Motörhead is fascinating and there's a lot of good telling in here, in some places, but I think it still deserves a better telling, with more care than this one was able to offer.

Martyn says

One word: editing.

Sean says

Received from Netgalley and ECW Press for review.

Thanks to both for this book. I have over my many years heard most of Motorhead and to relive the early years again, with what I believe are the best, was a delight.

It shows how hard or easy it was to start a band and stick with it through thick and thin.

Lemmy; Phil and Eddie were so loud in their day, and reading this showed who liked or did not like them. It was a great insight into their lives joining the band and reliving the early albums.

A great read.

Charles says

A good inside look at the rise of Motorhead. Takes us through the first years and the albums with the primary/original members: Lemmy, Filthy Phil Taylor, and Fast Eddie Clarke. Lots of quotes from these members. An interesting element of that is the contradictions. Members say one thing and then say the opposite a few moments later. Probably makes some sense given what I knew already about the characters. One thing I learned is that Lemmy, supposedly at least, was not as involved with the music in this period as were Phil and Eddie. Lemmy wrote the lyrics, of course.

Scott Cardwell says

Really a great book if you want to know the details of Motorhead.

Carlton Duff says

Learned a great deal about the dynamics (there is a word not used in the Motörhead conversation very often) of their sound such as Eddie switching from Les Pauls to Strats to compensate for Lemmy's tone being mids heavy.

A Reader's Heaven says

(I received a free copy of this book from Net Galley in exchange for an honest review.)

Beer Drinkers and Hell Raisers is the first book to celebrate the classic-era Motörhead lineup of Lemmy Kilmister, "Fast" Eddie Clarke, and Phil "Philthy Animal" Taylor. Through interviews with all of the principal troublemakers, Martin Popoff celebrates the formation of the band and the records that made them legends: Motörhead, Overkill, Bomber, Ace of Spades, No Sleep 'til Hammersmith, and Iron Fist. An in-depth coda brings the story up to date with the shocking recent deaths of Taylor and Kilmister. Motörhead comes to life in this book as bad-luck bad boys — doused in drink and drugs, most notably speed — incapable of running their lives right, save for Fast Eddie, who is charged with holding things together.

Popoff also examines the heady climate of music through the band's rise to prominence during the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, with detailed reflection on Motörhead's unique position in the scene as both originators and embattled survivors who carried on the renegade spirit of those times.

I went into this book really keen to read about that classic Motorhead line up. Had been a fan of the band for a number of years and always wanted to read more about those early years.

What I got, however, was a lot of snippets of interviews with the band and those around them. I got quite a bit of background of Lemmy's musical activities before even joining Hawkwind, let alone Motorhead - which I found to be just a little bit boring. It wasn't anything new. The stories of the band at the height of their success was great to reminisce about, but ultimately, there just wasn't enough to keep me interested.

If you aren't a huge fan of the band, this could be a good way to learn more about them. If you have followed them for a long time, there probably isn't a lot in here you didn't already know.

Paul
ARH

Stephen Hines says

There were some very interesting and funny parts in this but the author clearly had an agenda to discredit Lemmy's contributions to Motorhead's legacy. It's fine that he wanted to illuminate Fast Eddie's and Philthy Taylor's talents but there would be no Motorhead without Mr. Kilmister. Plus, the book was poorly edited and organized, which detracted from the narrative.

Benjamin Kahn says

Disappointing. I'm usually a big fan of Martin Popoff and I've been a big Motorhead fan for years, although I haven't listened to them since *Hammered* as I felt that they had got to the point where they were just putting out the same, competent but unexciting album over and over again. I was looking forward to hearing from Philthy and Fast Eddie - I've read a lot of Lemmy's words over the years. And Popoff, in his two books on the history of the NWOBHM, included a couple of quotes from Philthy and Brian Robertson that piqued my interest in Lemmy as a band mate. Everyone always speaks so glowingly about Lemmy that I thought it would be interesting to get another take.

This was not to be. There was a bit of angry vitriol towards the man from Phil Taylor once he was out of the band, and a little bit of good-natured criticism from Fast Eddie, but nothing major. And then Popoff makes sure he lays in on with a trowel finding guys to sing Lemmy's praises. Dee Snider, a couple of the guys from Anthrax, managers, industry guys - he's so intelligent, he's just a regular guy, great lyricist, underrated musician, true blue dyed-in-the-wool rocker - on and on. I don't need a hatchet job done on Lemmy, but there are already tons of books and magazine article out there singing his praises. I think the slight complaints presented here don't need to be countered with the deluge of bystanders talking about what a saint he is. Unless it's there merely as filler, which there seems to be a lot of in this book.

I usually find Popoff's books sharp, full of insight and well-edited. This book feels flabby and poorly put together. In the chapter talking about the first Motorhead album, he establishes early on that Bronze records wouldn't put out an album but would put out a single, and then based on the success of that single, they would commit to an album. Then, later, when Fast Eddie is talking about the album, he tells that whole story again. We don't need that twice. Edit, dammit. He does the same thing late when Dee Snider tells a story about Lemmy introducing the band at an early gig in England. Snider was very impressed with Lemmy doing this. But he does what a lot of us do when we tell a story. He tells the story, and then basically repeats the salient points of the story a second time in admiration. Great for conversation, boring in a book. Story once, not twice.

This happens again when Fast Eddie talks about Mick Farren's death. Early in the book, Clarke mentions that Farren died on stage, the way he thought Lemmy would go and the way that he thought he would go. Then much closer to the end, Clarke rambles on at length about Farren dying on stage, dying with his boots on, etc. Do we need this twice? Did Popoff re-read this at all before sending it to the publisher?

The last chapter, in which Popoff describes Lemmy's death and funeral and Phil's death, is written poorly. He describes Lemmy's funeral in great detail, touches on Phil's death, and then has an extensive quote from Eddy prior to their deaths talking about getting in touch with Phil, going to see Phil, hoping the three of them could play together once more. Put that before the deaths. Otherwise, you're just trying to milk it for poignancy and the reader is sitting there going "nice sentiments, but they're dead." It spoils the effect.

The description of the funeral with a list of which rock stars attended and who sent greetings was a little too Entertainment Tonight for me. But Popoff (and Lemmy) both seem to use praise from other stars as vindication. Several times, it's mentioned that Ozzy and Lemmy were lifetime friends. When Popoff wastes a couple of pages defending Lemmy's collecting of Nazi regalia as just interest and not a sign of his being a Nazi, Ozzy is listed as also collecting Nazi regalia, amongst others. When Lemmy is lamenting how no one ever took the band seriously as musicians, he cites Ozzy's friendship and Lars Ulrich's declaration of Motorhead's influence as vindicating Motorhead against the naysayers. Motorhead was around for a long time. Is it surprising that they influenced people, and that they knew other rock stars?

The book leans heavily on interviews with Fast Eddy Clarke. I appreciated that, as his is a voice that I haven't heard much over the years. But I would have appreciated a little more Philthy, a little more Lemmy, and especially the interplay between the band members which Popoff has done so well in his most successful works - books on Blue Oyster Cult, Deep Purple, Rainbow, the Scorpions, etc. Here it's mostly Fast Eddie, with interjections from the others. There's no back and forth. And after awhile, you start to tire of the one voice. I found this with Popoff's book on Dio. Once it was just Ronnie talking, you started to get tired of hearing him. I was a little tired of Fast Eddie by the end.

When he does include extensive quotes from Lemmy - Lemmy on religion, on war, on being underappreciated - I find him really boring. I think I've read enough quotes from him to know where he's coming from, and I no longer find him that interesting. And so earnest too. What happened to his fabled sense of humour?

All in all, this book was not really worth the read. I would maybe recommend it as a supplement to other books, something that can help round out your understanding, but not as a primary source.

Lance Lumley says

I am not a major Motorhead fan, in fact I only know a little bit about the band, besides Lemmy and his interviews in magazines (and the movie about him). This book, which was an advanced copy from ECW Press was a great read that covers the classic lineup. The book was an easy read and informative (and entertaining). You do not have to be a Motorhead fan to enjoy this book, which has interviews from members covering the lineup and breakup of that band's era. If you liked VH1's "Behind The Music," you'd like this book, because Popoff writes in a way that you are sitting there at a table (or in Lemmy's case-The Rainbow Bar) listening to band members tell their stories.

This is a great read, and I'm not even a huge Motorhead fan.

(www.lancewrites.wordpress.com)
