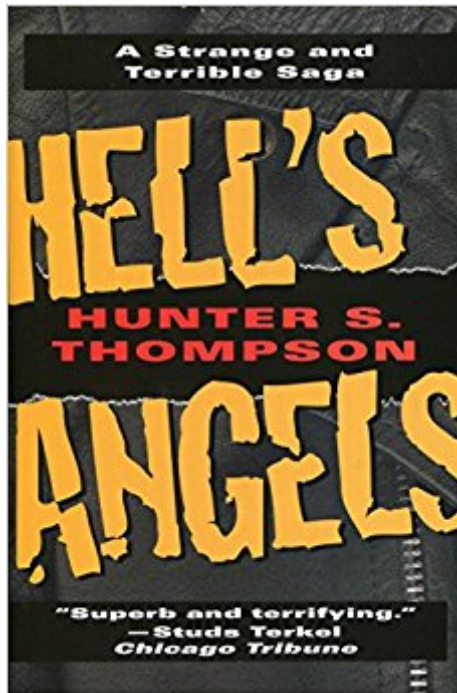




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Hell's Angels: A Strange And Terrible Saga



Synopsis

Gonzo journalist and literary roustabout Hunter S. Thompson flies with the angels—Hell’s Angels, that is—in this short work of nonfiction. “California, Labor Day weekend . . . early, with ocean fog still in the streets, outlaw motorcyclists wearing chains, shades and greasy Levis roll out from damp garages, all-night diners and cast-off one-night pads in Frisco, Hollywood, Berdoo and East Oakland, heading for the Monterey peninsula, north of Big Sur. . . The Menace is loose again.” Thus begins Hunter S. Thompson’s vivid account of his experiences with California’s most notorious motorcycle gang, the Hell’s Angels. In the mid-1960s, Thompson spent almost two years living with the controversial Angels, cycling up and down the coast, reveling in the anarchic spirit of their clan, and, as befits their name, raising hell. His book successfully captures a singular moment in American history, when the biker lifestyle was first defined, and when such countercultural movements were electrifying and horrifying America. Thompson, the creator of Gonzo journalism, writes with his usual bravado, energy, and brutal honesty, and with a nuanced and incisive eye; as *The New Yorker* pointed out, “For all its uninhibited and sardonic humor, Thompson’s book is a thoughtful piece of work.” As illuminating now as when originally published in 1967, *Hell’s Angels* is a gripping portrait, and the best account we have of the truth behind an American legend.

From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Paperback: 273 pages

Publisher: Ballantine Books; 1st Ballantine Books trade ed edition (September 29, 1996)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780345410085

ISBN-13: 978-0345410085

ASIN: 0345410084

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.8 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 434 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #11,372 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #15 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Gender Studies > Men #30 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Social Sciences > Folklore & Mythology #71 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Pop Culture > General

Customer Reviews

"Thompson has presented us with a close view of a world most of us would never encounter. His language is brilliant, his eye remarkable."--The New York Times Book Review
"Superb and terrifying."--Studs Terkel, Chicago Tribune

"California, Labor Day weekend . . . early, with ocean fog still in the streets, outlaw motorcyclists wearing chains, shades and greasy Levis roll out from damp garages, all-night diners and cast-off one-night pads in Frisco, Hollywood, Berdoo and East Oakland, heading for the Monterey peninsula, north of Big Sur. . . The Menace is loose again." Thus begins Hunter S. Thompson's vivid account of his experiences with California's most notorious motorcycle gang, the Hell's Angels. In the mid-1960s, Thompson spent almost two years living with the controversial Angels, cycling up and down the coast, reveling in the anarchic spirit of their clan, and, as befits their name, raising hell. His book successfully captures a singular moment in American history, when the biker lifestyle was first defined, and when such countercultural movements were electrifying and horrifying America. Thompson, the creator of Gonzo journalism, writes with his usual bravado, energy, and brutal honesty, and with a nuanced and incisive eye; as The New Yorker pointed out, "For all its uninhibited and sardonic humor, Thompson's book is a thoughtful piece of work." As illuminating now as when originally published in 1967, Hell's Angels is a gripping portrait, and the best account we have of the truth behind an American legend. "From the Hardcover edition.

"Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" isn't Hunter S. Thompson's best work, this is. With deeper roots in reality, this is the true dawn of Gonzo Journalism. The Fear-and-Loathings take the Gonzo concept off-the-charts and are more an amusing romp or dark commentary. This is journalism rooted in first-hand experience, slightly twisted by a fine mind and writer of the first calibre.

Hunter S. Thompson is just fun to read. He has a style that so many people have tried to replicate but no one else can match his rhythm and vivid imagery. It's so amazing that years after the fact, you can dive right in and feel what it is to know the Hell's Angels at their most infamous. If you are easily offended, this may not be the book for you, but if you want a little adventure out of your comfort zone, it really is a good read.

That Thompson could take the grimy, greasy world of the early Hell's Angels and turn it into something strangely beautiful is a testimony to his skill as an author. That he could so vividly portray

the anger and resentment of the 1960s, that storied era of peace and love, is a much needed reminder that we are in danger of romanticizing an important and beguiling period of American history. As it turns out, the Hell's Angels listened to Bob Dylan and hung out with Allen Ginsberg: try to wrap your mind around that!

Great book

At a literary level I would give this book 5 stars. It's well written in an unusual, yet interesting style. The combination of first and third person accounts within the book keep it from getting too tedious. I also think that Thompson made a valiant (if somewhat ineffective) effort to be objective in his observations and show both sides of most stories. Unfortunately, one could tell this attempt at objectivity was unsuccessful at times as displayed by his apparent friendship with several of the Angels through the course of his research. In his defense, it's probably pretty difficult to live and party with these guys for a sustained period of time without some emotional attachment. With respect to the content, I guess I expected more detailed personal first hand experiences rather than summaries of historical events so I pulled 1 star away for that. To be fair, Thompson added some notes regarding the Angels' side of the story, but nonetheless I felt a bit deceived as I expected the book to be all first hand knowledge given that he had supposedly ridden with the Angels for a year. I was also disappointed that his version of "riding" with the Angels consisted of riding to their hangouts on a bike, but for longer runs such as Bass Lake he took his car - how lame is that? One curiosity was the post script which referred to an event (which I won't divulge out of respect for the readers who haven't yet read the book) which took place after he wrote the book. According to Hunter's account, the event came out of the blue with no provocation at all. I find that somewhat suspicious and would be interested in knowing a little more detail on what precipitated that particular event. Perhaps it is as he described, but I just got the feeling that there was more to it than met the eye. All in all, if one is truly interested in the subject matter I feel the book is worth the read because it's considered by some a classic, but more importantly because it contains another angle not addressed in other books recounting HAMC history and events. (namely Sonny Barger's Hells Angel: The Life and Times of Sonny Barger and the Hell's Angels Motorcycle Club, which I am reading now and so far have found to be a bit one sided and self indulgent, but that's another review yet to be written...).

Another great one by Hunter S Thompson

The condition of the paperback was exactly what i expected based on the description. Personally, i love old beat up paperbacks that have been read, and read before. This copy was a bit scuffed but better than alot of books i own. Completely readable and no chance of falling apart anytime soon. Not being an original collectors copy it is still a vintage copy. (i like that) As for content? read it and find out for yourself. Hunter is about as honest as it gets. He covers everything he learned and saw while riding with the Angels for a solid year, about that certain MAD and CRAZY sub-culture, you will not find a better or more accurate account in any other book or article. Hells Angels is what Thompson would call: True Grit. Total Coverage. -over and out-

In order to consider yourself a fan of the great late doctor then i must insist that you purchase this book and read it as it the gateway into the "gonzo" way of writing/reporting. Being his first published novel I would suggest that you read this, F&L in Las vegas, F&L on the campain trail '72, and the rum diary to give yourself a basis for the rest of his memoir styled books. With that said this is a very good book and a quick read, understand going into it that this is a book about the Hell's Angels, not the girls scouts so may not be for everyone, however, Hunter does a good job portraying both the good and the bad, and the misunderstood sides of this outlaw biker gang. There is a lot of straight facts about this or that and it is not simply a day in the life of HST riding around with the Angels. This book is more or less a biography about the angels and a select few members that Hunter met with and traveled with for a year, but keep in mind it is not so much a novel as it is a lengthy news report on the Angels, riddled with personal experiences. As i said this is a must read for HST fans, or anyone with an interest in the great writer, as this is the book that first put him on the map. not to mention just a good book all together.

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