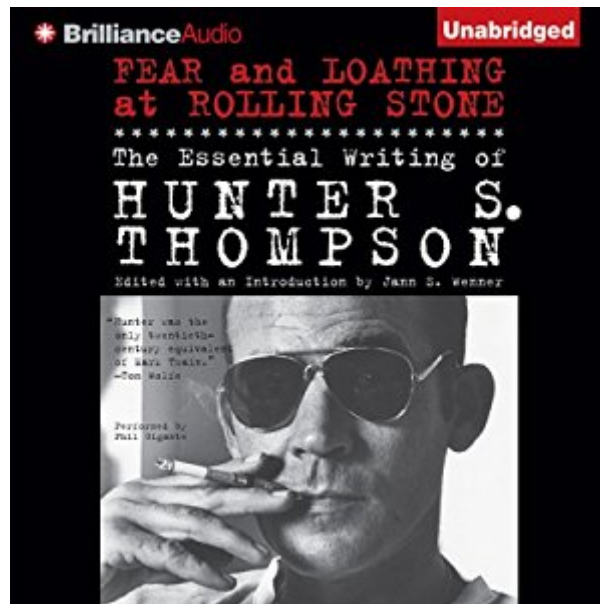


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Fear And Loathing At Rolling Stone: The Essential Writing Of Hunter S. Thompson



Synopsis

"Buy the ticket, take the ride," was a favorite slogan of Hunter S. Thompson, and it pretty much defined both his work and his life. *Fear and Loathing at Rolling Stone* showcases the roller-coaster of a career at the magazine that was his literary home. Jann S. Wenner, the outlaw journalist's friend and editor for nearly thirty-five years, has assembled articles that begin with Thompson's infamous run for sheriff of Aspen on the Freak Party ticket in 1970 and end with his final piece on the Bush-Kerry showdown of 2004. In between is Thompson's remarkable coverage of the 1972 presidential campaign - a miracle of journalism under pressure - and plenty of attention paid to Richard Nixon, his *blacks*; encounters with Muhammad Ali, Bill Clinton, and the Super Bowl; and a lengthy excerpt from his acknowledged masterpiece, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*. Woven throughout is selected correspondence between Wenner and Thompson, most of it never before published. It traces the evolution of a personal and professional relationship that helped redefine modern American journalism, and also presents Thompson through a new prism as he pursued his lifelong obsession: The life and death of the American Dream.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is an utter disgrace. It is far from "The Essential Hunter S. Thompson" as it is heavily edited throughout by Jann Wenner and Paul Scanlon. So what the reader is getting is a chopped and butchered version of Hunter S. Thompson's original articles. We are not even talking about excerpts here, the articles in this collection bear no resemblance to the original writing. For example,

Strange Rumblings in Aztlan has the entire first page chopped out, with this new edited version kicking off in the middle of a paragraph. To mask this Wenner and Scanlon have combined two of Thompson's sentences to start off the article. Yeah you read that correctly, the first sentence is a mutated piece of writing thanks to the hand of the editors. Fear and Loathing at The Super Bowl has pages upon pages cut from the original source, leaving an article that is disjointed and all over the place. The entire collection continues in this fashion with only 2-3 articles remaining untouched. I cannot fathom what Jann Wenner was thinking when he decided to take this approach with Hunter's writing. Thompson would never have tolerated such interference with his work and Wenner knows this only too well. The collection also claims to include letters and memos between the pair but the reality is that you get 50 short letters of little substance, some of which are already published in Fear and Loathing in America. Comparing the two, the reader will also discover that Wenner has edited the letters, as if butchering the articles wasn't enough. So at the end of the day, this book serves no real purpose. All of this work is already freely available in its original form, as Thompson intended, in both The Great Shark Hunt and The Gonzo Papers Anthology.

Hardcover-3 page Forward by Jann Wenner, publisher of Rolling Stone Magazine (RS) and Thompson's friend, 8 page Introduction by writer Paul Scanlon, 561 pages of text, and Acknowledgments page. The book contains no photographs or other reproductions, except the cover photo. Interspersed throughout is a very small sampling of correspondence between RS publisher Wenner and Thompson, which tries to tie together the various pieces used in this book. But the various pieces (and I mean pieces) of writing lose most, if not all, their effectiveness used the way Wenner has done here. He should be ashamed of himself for exploiting Thompson's name and writing in this manner. Depending on how you view this book, it may simply be a money generating effort (which I believe), or as a kind of (very) loose, alternative biography (?) of Hunter Thompson and his (early) years at RS, as seen through heavily edited excerpts of his writing. If (like me) you've read all of Thompson's writing over the years-including his books and articles published in RS-you won't glean anything in the way of information about Thompson's life and/or writing. But for some new readers, they will find Thompson's take on America and the legal/political machine-and the people involved-during some intense years interesting. But purchase the original books as written by Thompson. The "star" rating is used as a loose guide for people who've read nothing of Thompson's writings. This is a look, using Thompson's writing and some "correspondence" between Wenner and Thompson, at the "Hunter Thompson era" at RS. Is it interesting? Yes-maybe if you're new to Thompson and the many articles published in RS over a

number of years. But to most readers this will read as a travesty.

I wish had a "No stars - comment" rating option. HST's work is strong enough to make this a 5 star book, especially if the pieces are new to the reader, but it's almost entirely a reprinting of work for which RS undoubtedly holds the copyright, and there's very little new, making it a one or two star for an HST fan. It is a nice collection of some spectacular HST writing, but if you're already a fan, you've probably already read most of it. There is very little new here, as most of it is RS articles re-published. In fact, it feels most of the book is *Fear And Loathing: On The Campaign Trail*; if you've read that, you've read much of this book. Fundamentally, though, this book is troubling for two reasons. One, it is just another bald-faced attempt at wringing more money out of HST's ghost by Mr. Wenner and co -- maybe, maybe if there was any indication in the intro / cover / etc that the profits were being donated to a cause in line with HST's philosophies, that's ok. Otherwise, it's just craven greed. Two, it's another attempt by Mr. Wenner to make himself look better and HST worse... that says a lot when the other guy is, you know, dead. At least, in this version, it's slightly less insulting in its "I'm actually a good guy!" and "HST was a terrible person!" character-assassination efforts, or at least it's not as aggressive in them. I can't shake the feeling that Mr. Wenner is either in denial of, ignorant of, or upset by the notion that HST is a main (the only?) reason RS ever became what it was, instead of just another local-rag newsletter rotting in a pile by the door of Rasputin Records, and his books are an effort to deal with it... and result in an unpleasant experience for the HST-fan reader.

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