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Heaven And Hell: My Life In The Eagles (1974-2001)



Synopsis

The Eagles are the bestselling, and arguably the tightest-lipped, American group ever. Now band member and guitarist Don Felder finally breaks the Eagles's years of public silence to take fans behind the scenes. He shares every part of the band's wild ride, from the pressure-packed recording studios and trashed hotel rooms to the tension-filled courtrooms, and from the joy of writing powerful new songs to the magic of performing in huge arenas packed with roaring fans.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

By now, no Eagles fan should be surprised by tales told about "The Gods," Don Henley and Glenn Frey, and how they have treated (or mistreated) their fellow musicians over the years. What makes this book stand out is that the recounting here is done from the inside, by someone who is not only very capable of telling that history, but is also adept at conveying it in a very readable, conversational way. This is guitarist Don Felder's memoir-to-date, "Heaven and Hell." Other reviewers have covered the basics of Felder's life story, tracing his beginnings in Gainesville, Florida; his growing focus on music and guitars; and his father's undue influence on his life. Knowing where he'll eventually end up, the pages make for interesting and anticipatory reading. We follow Felder's winding career path (which includes attending Woodstock) as it eventually leads toward the Eagles, to California, and to the celebrity and opulent lifestyle that only rock stars can earn. And of course: simultaneously to alcohol, drugs, extramarital liaisons, and chain-saw attacks on hotel room furniture. (You go, Joe!) Those folks who have also read books like Jonathan Gould's "Can't Buy Me Love: The Beatles, Britain & America" will no doubt be stirred by the resemblance of

the Eagles to the Fab Four. Felder himself refers to the analogy on page 116 when Randy Meisner and Bernie Leadon are said to have adopted "the George and Ringo positions" in the group. Ain't it the truth? Here we have a band made up of highly creative musicians, dominated by two of the original members (who seem to be writing most of the songs) and a manager who's behind it all, calling the shots.

When HEAVEN AND HELL was first announced, word-of-mouth was that it was going to be so incendiary that Frey and Henley would need asbestos gloves to read the thing. After breezing through HEAVEN AND HELL - and it is a quick, entertaining read - we're treated to the following: The Eagles did a lot of drugs and booze. They jumped every woman that came near. Don Henley was a sour-faced, perfectionist control freak. Glenn Frey was a ego-tripping control freak who treated people like dirt. Joe Walsh was a good-natured, slightly bent guitar hero who loved to trash hotel rooms, etc. And so?? All those peccadillos were fairly common knowledge or at least rumored for years...all Felder's book does is to confirm it!HEAVEN AND HELL may have exposed the Eagles dirty laundry but - substitute a few names here and there - and it could be the story of the Stones, Zeppelin or any major rock group creating great music amidst drugs, alcohol, groupies and oversized egos. Why should The Eagles have been different?Actually, given Henley and Frey's demeaning treatment of other members of the group, I thought Felder did an even-handed job of describing the group's life in the fast lane. People may question why he wrote the book but why shouldn't he? He was there; he has a perfect right to record what happened. His version of events may not agree with the version Frey and Henley want the public to accept but so what.As I was reading Felder's book, time and again I got the feeling I was getting 'The Rest of the Story.' For example, as much as I liked the Eagles' music, often-times it seemed almost too perfect, too mistake-free. Now I know why.

First of all, I don't feel sorry for Felder. He is more than wealthy enough to maintain himself for the rest of his life. I feel this book is notable because he has given us a look into the workings of the Eagles. The last 4-5 chapters were the most interesting for me. Felder describes in detail the control Henley and Frey had in the band and how they un-equally shared the revenue with the Hell Freezes over Tour. Whereas Schmidt and Walsh signed their agreements willingly, it was Felder who tried to keep everything equal due to the original agreement they had when he had joined the band, and it was his downfall. We hear and feel Felder's frustration when attempting to talk to Henley and Frey through their Manager Irving Azoff. Azoff himself protected more of Henley and Frey than the other

band members. They all stayed in different floors away from each other in hotels during touring. When it was promised that the percentage of income would be worked out with Felder, (It never Happened). After Felder was fired, he was forced to sue the Eagles over constant mis-management and handling of the finances. This book put Irzoff, Henley and Frey in an extremely bad light, and I must say I agree completely with Felder on many of his examinations. The Company created called "Eagles Limited" was the organization made up by all the original members including Don Felder. Each had a 20% part of the organization equally. When Bernie and Randy (original members) left the group, these shares were given back freely but not extended to Schmidt or Walsh. This is probably the beginning of the control ride that Henley and Frey started with the group. To this day Schmidt and Walsh are just hired session and performance members only. Felder did still retain all his membership rights.

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