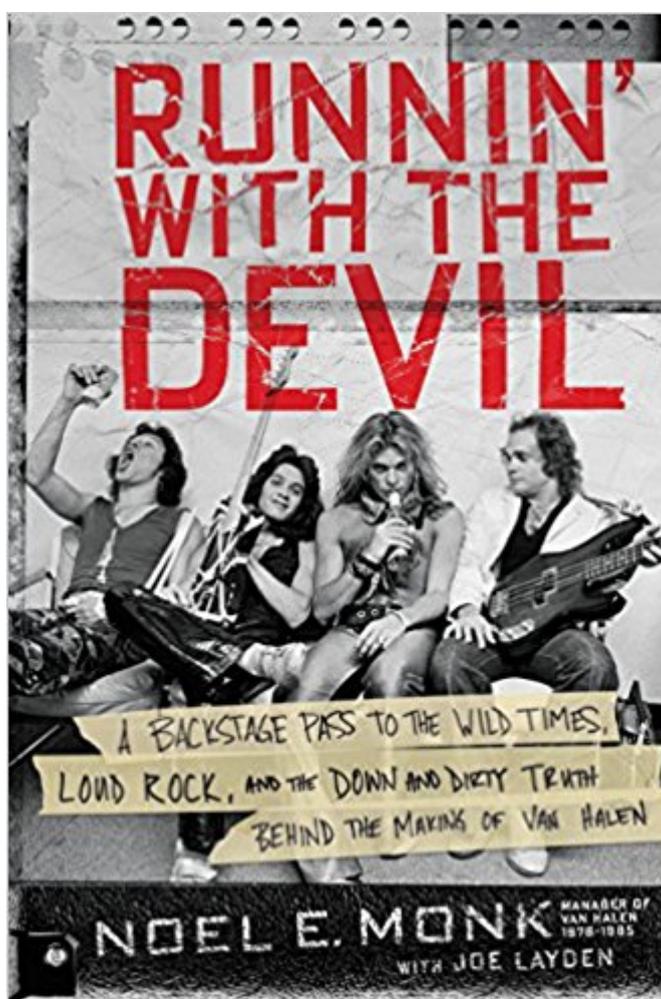


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Runnin' With The Devil: A Backstage Pass To The Wild Times, Loud Rock, And The Down And Dirty Truth Behind The Making Of Van Halen



Synopsis

The manager who shepherded Van Halen from obscurity to rock stardom goes behind the scenes to tell the complete, unadulterated story of David Lee Roth, Eddie Van Halen, and the legendary band that changed rock music. Van Halen's rise in the 1980s was one of the most thrilling the music world had ever seen—their mythos an epic party, a sweaty, sexy, never-ending rock extravaganza. During this unparalleled run of success, debauchery, and drama, no one was closer to the band than Noel Monk. A man who had worked with some of rock's biggest and most notorious names, Monk spent seven years with Van Halen, serving first as their tour manager then as their personal manager until 1985, when both he and David Lee Roth exited as controversy, backstabbing, and disappointment consumed the band. Throughout Van Halen's meteoric rise and abrupt halt, this confidant, fixer, friend, and promoter saw it all and lived to tell. Now, for the first time, he shares the most outrageous escapades—from their coming of age to their most shocking behavior on the road; from Eddie's courtship and high profile wedding to Valerie Bertinelli to the incredible drug use which would ultimately lead to everyone's demise. Sharing never-before-told stories, Monk paints a compelling portrait of Eddie Van Halen, bringing into focus the unique combination of talent, vision, hardship, and naiveté that shaped one of the greatest rock guitarists of all time—and made him and his brother vulnerable to the trappings and failings of fame. Illustrated with dozens of rare photographs from Monk's vaults, *Runnin' with the Devil* is manna from rock heaven no Van Halen fan can miss.

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Customer Reviews

“More than an insider’s story about VH; Monk also shares fascinating firsthand information about how the music industry operated at that time. An absolute must-read for VH fans and fans of rock music memoirs. (Library Journal) “Too bad the title *The Dirt* was already taken. Noel Monk is the man who went from being Van Halen’s road manager to their business manager during their Diamond Dave prime. He holds nothing back. Monk paints a convincing picture of a brilliant, substance-addled young band that wasn’t built to last. (Rolling Stone) “The Van Halen book you’ve been waiting for. Brutally honest and at times shocking. Van Halen fans will be discussing and debating it with the same attention to detail as Eddie’s finger-tapping work on *Eruption*. (Houston Press) “There’s plenty of sex and drugs here, along with the absurdities of the hard-rock life. (New York Times Book Review)

Beginning in 1978, Van Halen’s rise was one of the most thrilling the rock world had ever seen. Their mythos: an epic party with a sweaty, sexy, finger-tapping guitar solo as an encore. During this infamous run of success, debauchery, and drama, few people were closer to the band than their manager, Noel Monk. A man who’d worked with some of rock’s biggest and most notorious names, Monk spent seven years with Van Halen, serving initially as their tour manager then as their personal manager until 1985, when he and David Lee Roth exited as controversy, infighting, and egos consumed the band. Now, for the first time, Monk shares his side of the band’s rapid ascent and abrupt halt, both of which left rock music forever changed. During his time behind the scenes, he saw it all and lived to tell the tale, helping the band grow from club-performing novices to hardened veterans who sold out stadiums. Lifting back the curtain on one of the great untold stories of rock music, Monk details the most outrageous escapades from his time as confidant, fixer, and promoter—from hotel room destruction to outrageous backstage behavior to Eddie Van Halen’s high-profile marriage to Valerie Bertinelli to the incredible drug use and drinking that would ultimately fuel the conflict between the band members. More than just presenting a portrait of sex and drugs, though there’s plenty of both, Monk goes behind the legend of Eddie Van Halen, bringing into focus the unique combination of talent, vision, hardship, and naiveté that not only shaped one of the greatest rock guitarists of all time, but also made him vulnerable to the trappings of fame. Monk also sheds light on a breakup long shrouded in rumor and animosity, telling the story of David Lee

Roth's departure as he saw it and explaining how a band at the height of their powers found themselves struggling in vain to hold it all together. Complete with sixteen pages of never-before-seen photos of life with the band, *Runnin' with the Devil* offers Monk's backstage view of Van Halen's journey from obscurity to headliners, only to watch it all fall apart. Messy, loud, and most of all fun, this is a look inside Van Halen unlike any you've ever seen.

I am a huge fan of the original iteration of Van Halen, and have been so for 30 years. Unfortunately, I was too young to see them in concert during that era. Anytime I can listen to live recordings from that era or read about their dominance of rock 'n' roll from 1978 thru 1985, I do so eagerly. So when I heard about this book being published, I pre-ordered it as soon as I could, and started reading it as soon as it arrived on my doorstep. I thought this book was a good read, and I learned some new things about Van Halen. I always knew DLR was a narcissistic egomaniac, and that the VH brothers had hard fought lifelong battles with alcoholism, but this book surprised me with how deeply Alex/Edward spiraled into their addictions, or just how much Dave became full of himself to the point that he was downright mean and intolerable to be around. Reading how the three of them treated bassist Michael Anthony broke my heart. I don't think Noel Monk had a bone to pick with the band, nor do I think he set out to seek revenge for what he went through as the band manager, but I do think he felt betrayed by Van Halen after all the hard work he put in as their manager for 7 years. I think he did his best to be as matter-of-fact as he could about his time with the band, and while he pulled no punches, there was some bitterness to his tone. I've read DLR's autobiography (twice), along with Van Halen Rising and Sammy Hagar's autobiography. I would say this one is as good as the other three. It's a bit more gritty in its details about the VH brothers' addictions than SH or DLR's autobiographies, and it wasn't as detailed as Van Halen Rising, but it does a great job of portraying what happened between 1978 and 1985. I do wish he would have present for and been able to write more about the recording of 1984 and the prior albums. If you want to view Van Halen through rose-colored lenses, and just appreciate greatness of the DLR-era albums (except Diver Down), then don't read this book. If you want an honest behind-the-scenes look at the rise and fall of the one of greatest rock 'n' roll bands of all time, then read this book.

If you've read numerous books that detail the typical debauchery and fame associated with rock and roll music. Whether they're written by current/former members of a band or managers, the books usually follow the same set of rules: 1) the band is not what it once

was 2) there are always tensions/troubles amongst the members and 3) drugs, alcohol and sex contribute largely to both 1) and 2). While every band is generally illustrated as being more decadent than others, the stories are all basically the same. The only difference being how believable the stories are and how well those stories are told. Van Halen's story is neither shocking nor unique, but Noel Monk's *WITH THE DEVIL* serves an interesting and believable snapshot of Van Halen's early days that is worth reading. What I like best about *WITH THE DEVIL* is that it captures the explosive and raw original lineup of Van Halen (brothers Alex and Eddie Van Halen, David Lee Roth and Michael Anthony) not the milquetoast-era Van Halen with Sammy Hagar (sorry, Van Hagar is not the band I grew up listening to). Noel Monk, who became the band's manager after serving as its tour manager, offers readers a fly-on-the-wall perspective of those critical, decadent years (1978-1985) that made Van Halen a modern pillar of the rock and roll Parthenon. Honestly, nothing that Noel Monk writes about Van Halen is really THAT outrageous or unbelievable. Right off the bat, he confirms what even casual Van Halen fans assumed about the band: the lead singer is an insecure prima-donna, the guitar wizard is in his own world, the drummer plays yes-man to his uber-talented brother and the quiet bass player stays in the shadows like a stow-away on a cruise ship. This eclectic group of individuals contributed to a chemical equation that was brilliant, yet fragile and combustible. Monk elaborates on what we already know about this incarnation of the band wasn't meant to last. I found his storytelling both intriguing, entertaining and I every time I put the book down, I looked forward to picking it back up again to continue the journey. As stated previously, there really isn't anything too shocking about reading a biopic of a famous rock band yet that wasn't peppered with drugs and sex; Van Halen certainly had its fair share of both. I did find the rather "noobish" nature of the band members somewhat funny to read about. Edward Van Halen is portrayed as a cherubic kid all the way through the book. Even though his musical virtuosity puts him in the same lofty status as Jimi Hendrix, the book conveys him as somewhat socially awkward and quite naive, even when courting his future wife, Valeri Bertinelli. The best parts of the book, though, are those with David Lee Roth. The "stud on stage" is, surprise, characterized as all bark and no bite. Monk accounts for numerous occasions where Roth's mouth puts himself in embarrassing situations. Even though Monk calls Roth out for being less manly than his stage persona and a singer with limited ability, the author frequently affirms the spandex-clad Ken

Doll as possessing the highest wattage in a 4-pack of dim bulbs. Business-savvy and artfully self-promoting, Monk asserts that no other singer was more suited to write and vocalize the lyrics that accompanied Eddie Van Halen's trademark music style ... without the singer and the guitarist, Van Halen would not exist. Aside from accounting the personal side of band members, Monk provides us with the hectic and thankless job of managing a headlining rock band. We get a healthy dose of managerial issues that rendered Monk as more of a firefighter than a manager; there were always fires needing to be extinguished. Whether it be tricking a major record label into ignoring a contract deadline to re-negotiate a better deal for the band, fighting counterfeit merchandise peddlers (literally and figuratively) or serving as the glue and tape that holds the band together, we get a clear idea of the pressure Monk experienced with Van Halen. What is shocking is how much the band needed him, yet for his entire tenure, Monk never received anything but a month-to-month contract. The only issue I had with the book is guessing the rationale for writing the book. While not an overt hit-job on the band that unceremoniously dumped him, Monk presents himself as ultimately being victimized. There is a slight tone of saintliness throughout and Monk often uses the phrase "we" when referring to the band's success on many levels; we never get any indication that he did anything wrong, so it's easy to detect a slight whiff of sour grapes. This book was written shortly after the legal deadline allowing him to write about the band had passed; one can assume different degrees of payback were motives in writing the book. Regardless, I still felt it was written in an honest and sincere manner. If anything, the book is openly empathetic to Van Halen's bass player, Michael Anthony, who is duped and dumped-on by the other band members to this very day; probably the saddest and most pathetic aspect of Van Halen. This is one of the better rock biographies I've read in a long time (and I've read quite a few). Most of these books try to portray bands as Vikings who rape and pillage everywhere they roam. Monk reveals a lot of personal and even embarrassing Van Halen moments, but these stories come across as much more believable, not as cheap attempts to shock readers. *RUNNIN' WITH THE DEVIL* is gritty and entertaining; an enjoyable read whether you're a Van Halen fan or not.

The last paragraph of the prologue says, "I find myself smiling. This is the moment, the one that makes it all worthwhile; a moment so pure and joyful--so quintessentially rock 'n' roll--that I feel lucky to be a part of it." The prologue is written around a VH concert in 1982, and it grabs you. I mean it GRABS you! Reading just this one chapter will pull you Van Halen fans in so thoroughly that

you won't know what hit you. It did me. I've read David Lee Roth's autobiography, and many others that talk about the Van Halen juggernaut and era. This book is one from another point of view; one of their manager Neil Monk. And it is exhilarating in my opinion. It's a well written book and tells the VH story from a perspective you are likely not have heard before. It got me excited about Van Halen all over again. I'd love to read a book someday written by their manager from the Sammy Hagar days. This one by Neil is unabashedly about his time with the original VH, the David Lee Roth days. If you're even remotely a VH fan, Buy This Book! You won't be disappointed!

I had no problem finishing this, in fact, it went a little too fast. An honest look at the life and death of a legendary band from one who just watched a lot of it from ground zero. To my knowledge this makes four major books on Van Halen. "Everybody Wants Some" is a pretty good place to start, "Crazy From The Heat" is worth it for the laughs, "Van Halen Rising" is an excellent look at where things started, and this is a great look at how it all ended.

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