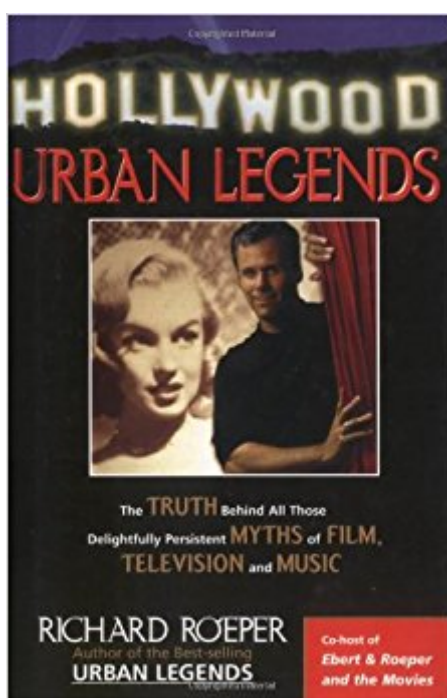


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Hollywood Urban Legends: The Truth Behind All Those Delightfully Persistent Myths Of Film Television, And Music



Synopsis

What does Richard Roeper know about the movies? Plenty. As the celebrated syndicated columnist for the Chicago Sun Times, Roeper has devoted at least a column a week to the buzz from Hollywood and the countless urban legends that emanate from Tinsel Town. And now, he's the co-host of "Ebert and Roeper and the Movies." Did Jane Fonda betray American POWs while visiting Hanoi? What's the story behind Tom Green's supposed raid on a bar mitzvah? Was Marilyn Monroe really a size 16? Was Mel Gibson horribly disfigured in a barroom brawl, leading to more than five years of rehab and plastic surgery before he could show his face in public? And what's the truth about the infamous bloopers on such shows as "The Newlywed Game," "Password" and the "Tonight Show"? Richard Roeper recounts these stories in Hollywood Urban Legends, as he gives us the truth behind the most deliciously false stories about our favorite stars.

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Customer Reviews

I have been reading Urban Legends since "The Vanishing Hitchhiker" in the '80's. This is a great take on the subject, Hollywood and those "Famous" stories. I appreciate Roeper's debunking, and he does an especially nice job with Marilyn's dress size. Unlike one person in the book, I don't consider Roeper to be "Mr. Urban Legend", that title is reserved for Jan Harold Brunvand. Brunvand's books are what you want to read for a general understanding of Urban Legends. This book, however, is a lot of fun to read.

My wife and I first heard this book being promoted on television and as avid readers of entertainment publications and books, I figured that I would give Richard Roeper's second book on "Urban Legends" a try. Once I received the book and started reading a few pages, I was instantly hooked. Next thing you know, I read the book completely. It's that entertaining. The book covers mostly urban legends relating to movies and television and a few on music. Without revealing too much what's in the book, here are a few urban legends that some of you may or may not know:*

Was John Wayne a draft-dodger? Can America's movie icon who was portrayed in many movies as a military hero be a draft-dodger in real life? True or False?*

Did Monica Lewinsky actually tell Larry King, "I've learned not to put things in my mouth that are bad for me"? True or False?*

Did Tom Green really attend a Bar Mitzvah dressed as Hitler? True or False?*

The reason why the Little Rascals is no longer on television is because Bill Cosby purchase the rights of "The Little Rascals" and he didn't want it shown anymore because of the shows portrayal of Blacks? True or False?*

Did Mama Cass of the Mamas and Papas die of a ham sandwich? True or False?*

Did Jane Fonda really betray P.O.W.'s during a trip to Hanoi? True or False?*

Is the children's song "Puff the Magic Dragon" by Peter, Paul and Mary about Marijuana? True or False?*

Was Lucille Ball a communist? True or False?*

Is there a curse among the actors who were on any of the "Poltergeist" movies? True or False?*

Roeper does a great job setting up the urban legend and gathering and analyzing the facts necessary to prove the urban legend right or wrong. As a person who never really cared too much for urban legends or followed many of them, I found the book very interesting and informative. I mean, how would I ever know that Chachi of the TV series "Happy Days" was popular in Korea because his name literally translated to "penis". Of course, for many people who have followed these legends, this book may be of no use to you because it may be a rehash of old legends that you may have known about already. But nevertheless this is one entertaining book that I wouldn't mind sharing with friends. Recommended reading!

Believe the bad reviews--this book is annoyingly written by a guy who did a little online research into subjects he knows nothing about, then claims to refute "urban legends," although he just plain gets much of his information wrong. The author devotes only a couple pages to each "urban legend" about entertainment but many of them are things you will have never heard of. Maybe being a Chicago newspaper writer makes him privy to gossip, but much of what is written here is silly stuff that most people would never believe. Some of it, however, not only is "legend" but true. He didn't do his homework and "refutes" things that have some truth to them. Or in some cases the author "suspects" they are not true due to logic, not being able to disprove them. For example, he discusses

"Myths of the Super Bowl" and immediately says his own falsehood. He claims "half the country's population observes" Super Bowl as a holiday. Not true--about 40% tune in for any part of it, and that includes those that just catch the halftime show. The Super Bowl has never in its history attracted half the population. He deals with "urban legends" about the game like the toilet flushing problem but he gives no evidence to disprove the rumors and hasn't done research to show what water levels are like during the game. Then the one about being able to predict the stock market based on the outcome of the Super Bowl ends up to be true 82% of the time! His response: "So what?" Okay, buddy, why are you writing the book then? That's like the chapter on Lucille Ball, which he claims that she was never a Communist. Yet he quotes from the Congressional transcripts in which they asked, "You did register to vote as a Communist?" and she responds, "Yes." Hey, Mr. newspaper man, she admits she was a registered Communist and no matter how much you want to say she wasn't a "card-carrying member," she confirms the legend that you deny! There are many examples in this book where the legends are valid or have some truth to them, while the author tries to claim he is proving them false. In another case he tries to tackle the Newlywed Game rumor and claims it isn't true. But in his own "proof" he confesses that the tape is bleeped so there is no way of knowing if it's true or not. This guy is a journalist? He doesn't have evidence to match his conclusions. Throughout the book he inserts his constant commentary, which usually demeans anything pop culture. He slams Gilligan's Island, Green Acres, and John Wayne, while defending Martha Stewart, standoffish Fred Grandy (Love Boat), Tom Green (?) and Pulp Fiction. If that's the kind of guy you like, you might enjoy this book. But for the most part it's smug and frustrating to read.

The concept of this book (urban legends regarding celebrities) is a good idea, but the "author" (cheesy movie reviewer) did such a horrible job writing and compiling this book that it was a major disappointment. The book is very disorganized, hard to follow, and haphazard in general. Instead of explaining each urban legend logically, the author will leave out important details, or will start in the middle of the story. Then scattered throughout the text are his own attempts at pointing out irony or including stupid puns. This book is more like an editorial, rather than a real source about urban legends. The other thing that really annoyed me is that the "author" was incorrect about whether some legends are true or not. I have seen the actual footage from a particular game show (it's been played several times on bloopers shows) that proves that the legend is indeed true, and this book will tell you that it's a myth. At least get your facts straight before you publish a ... book. Don't waste your money or your time. You could easily find all the same info in this book by spending a few

hours surfing the web.

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