



No One Here Gets Out Alive

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Here is Jim Morrison in all his complexity-singer, philosopher, poet, delinquent-the brilliant, charismatic, and obsessed seeker who rejected authority in any form, the explorer who probed "the bounds of reality to see what would happen..." Seven years in the writing, this definitive biography is the work of two men whose empathy and experience with Jim Morrison uniquely prepared them to recount this modern tragedy: Jerry Hopkins, whose famous Presley biography, *Elvis*, was inspired by Morrison's suggestion, and Danny Sugerman, confidant of and aide to the Doors. With an afterword by Michael McClure.

No One Here Gets Out Alive Details

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From Reader Review No One Here Gets Out Alive for online ebook

Janina says

I am not, nor have I ever been, a fan of The Doors. I tried once but it's just not my music. Nevertheless, I thought I should at least read a biography of Jim Morrison. Although I don't like his music, many other musicians and bands I appreciate, have cited him as a major influence and it is undeniable that Jim Morrison/The Doors have left their mark on music history. So I found this book in my local library and picked it up.

"No one here gets out alive" tells the story of Jim Morrison, from when he was a kid, moving around a lot with his family, due to his father being in the Navy, to when he was a teenager, becoming The Doors' singer and finally dying aged 27 in Paris.

And now - please dear Jim Morrison fans - don't behead me but I didn't like the book at all. In the book Jim Morrison comes across as an awfully smart but equally unlikable person (to me at least). If he was indeed an unlikable person that's certainly not the authors' fault. But they seemed to depict him nevertheless as somewhat of a saint who was loved and adored by everybody, which was hard for me to imagine. Also this kind of admiration seems to me out of place in a biography.

Dan O'Keefe says

It's Jim Morrison!

I was surprised (not really) at how similar his choices in literature was to me. Nietzsche, Verlaine, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Artaud, and a helluva lot more. The man was really an enigma to a lot of people; I think most people assume that he was just this druggie/drunk hippie who didn't have a real thought in his head.

Thing is, the Doors were doing things differently than anyone else. They make the point in this book that Morrison was trying to create high art and to treat music in the ancient Greek tradition of a joyous festival of transcendence. And it's clear that he was isolated because of his vast interest in poetry, philosophy, music, film, art, and literature.

Can't recommend it highly enough.

Ana says

J. Kahele says

This book to me was an obsessive take from the opinion of Danny Sugerman on Jim Morrison. I found some of the words to be quite hypocritical and at times a little demeaning. The Doors popularity was gained from their uniqueness as a band, that includes the voice of Jim Morrison. To say the man couldn't sing was an absolute lie. He stood out not only for his reckless ways, but also for his ability to sing in a way no other person could.

Eric Althoff says

I am of the opinion that most rock biographies are identical: From humble beginnings, the talented-but-unstable musician rises through hardship and adversity to the heights of stardom, where he experiences success and drugs/booze/women, and then falls gradually or swiftly from grace. "No One Here Gets Out Alive" does not much stray from that arc, but it is the energy and passion of the tale itself that makes it such a fascinating read.

Jerry Hopkins interviewed Jim Morrison for Rolling Stone several times during his brief life, and he and Danny Sugerman bring this first-hand knowledge to their thoroughly researched biography of one of classic rock's most fascinating yet most mercurial talents. Each chapter is told as if around a campfire, recounting not only the most sordid details but also the atmosphere, the personalities present, the emotions and the dangers and the triumphs that followed Morrison and the Doors on their meteoric rise into the rock pantheon. The epic drinking is here, as are the hordes of women and Morrison's notorious court cases, but so too is his little-seen humanity, his insecurity at being famous, his desire to be taken seriously as a poet, his aspirations to be more than just a car wreck spectacle for the public's enjoyment.

The authors approach their subject with both a clear love for their young subjects as well as their music--they are far more interested in helping us to try and understand the mystery than in hanging out the dirty laundry. In that way, this is a far more classy affair than the multitudes of "unauthorized" music bios that have followed since. It reads not as a requiem, but rather a celebration--chastizing Morrison for his unacceptable episodes without also condemning. Terrific pictures accompany the text, showing Morrison's physical as well as psychological spiral.

The book is a swift read, an absolute page-turner, and brings just a little bit of needed light to bear on America's foremost poet/musician, gone from us too soon.

Matt says

Passable only for my abiding love of all things Doors and Morrison (not always the same thing, y'unnerstand) and not because of any real depth or insight. Sugerman's got his obsequious head shoved straight up the ol' Lizard King's...er...*throne* that you can hardly see daylight but ah, what the hell. It's not like we're getting Plutarch or Lytton Strachey here...

Zach Bartell says

This is a very good book. I enjoyed reading it, and it introduced me to some of the philosophical ideas that Jim was into, like Nietzsche's ideas about classical archetypes (prompting me to look further), and just generally the idea that theatrical performances are very important and can seem to liberate people, as could have been the case in the late 60's when the Doors took the stage for the first time in coastal California. Jim was not just "a character" as some people might say, nor was he just "a bad role model" as said my dad when he agreed to pay the cost of this book for me in a bookstore in Wisconsin; Morrison was a wonderful poet who believed in the beautiful potential of man and woman and who lived out his own potential no matter what people thought about it. My only possible issue with the book is that it doesn't seem to go deep enough into Morrison's life, influence, and significance. But then again, it is a biography and not a cultural analysis. For all the other good stuff, if you truly want to be moved by Jim and what he wanted to say, I recommend reading Nietzsche along with his other favorite writers. Jim made himself into a religious symbol, and if you are interested in that, read more into it. Here is a link for just that purpose:
<http://home.earthlink.net/~delia5/pag...>

Greg says

For about a two month period of time in 11th grade I thought that The Doors were a really good band, and that Jim Morrison was not a douche bag. It was one of the dark times of my life. I read this book then and really liked it. Thinking back on it I know it's not a very good book, nor do I think The Doors are a very good band.

Ben says

When I was a pre-teen I thought this is what cool was.

Amanda says

I used to be obsessed with Morrison, he was such a troubled genius, although I think most are. Absolutely love the Doors, have all their music. His lyrics are like nothing I've ever heard, the darkness and the insight. Did you know he got the name The Doors from Huxley's The Doors of Perception?

Jim Cherry says

No One Here Gets Out Alive probably deserves a couple more stars on this review for its place in Rock 'n' Roll history. After all it provided a resurrection for The Doors and Jim Morrison, as well as laying out the Morrison mythology and opening The Doors for the next generation of fans.

No One Here was written by Jerry Hopkins, who had interviewed Morrison for Rolling Stone Magazine and after Morrison's death found himself more affected than he thought he should be, so he wrote book. During

the 70's there wasn't much interest in Jim Morrison and/or The Doors and he couldn't find a publisher, so Hopkins put the book away and went on to other things. That's where Danny Sugerman enters the story or rather re-enters the picture. Sugerman was a teenager that was hanging around The Doors office so Jim Morrison hired him to answer fan mail. When he ran across Hopkins and the No One Here manuscript he asked if he could try to sell the manuscript Hopkins said "sure." Sugerman then rewrote parts of it, some say in conjunction with Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek as ghost writer. Then Sugerman shopped the manuscript around again until he found a sympathetic editor at Warner Books, and then in unconscious synchronicity, Francis Ford Coppola's Apocalypse Now sparked The Doors renaissance in 1979/1980.

No One Here lays out and outlines the basic mythology and legend of Jim Morrison that is still in operation today. Morrison was the first born of career Navy man and a somewhat eccentric wife, they moved all around the country as Jim's father's assignments changed, from San Diego to Virginia to New Mexico where at about age 5 or 6 Morrison experienced a mystical experience which deeply affected his life. On the way to New Mexico Jim's father came upon an accident where a truckload of Indians had overturned and there were bodies and blood on the highway. Morrison felt as if at that moment the soul of a dead Indian leapt into his. Morrison also later said that it was the first time he tasted fear because his father and mother couldn't do anything, and his mother may have solidified the incident in Jim's mind by trying to reassure him that it was all a dream. With all the moving around Jim became a rather shy and bookish kid, reading everything he could get his hands on. He also became a double threat at school, a smart kid and a joker who's antics some times disturbed the class. He also started keeping journals and writing poetry. He decided to go to film school and enrolled at UCLA, not without some resistance from his father. At UCLA Morrison wrote essays on the history and theory of the cinema, and made a movie that seemed to have impressed no one except Ray Manzarek. Manzarek and Morrison seemed to have been friends at UCLA or maybe acquaintances, but Morrison was in one of Ray's films and filled in as a guitar player (it was unplugged) when Manzarek's band needed a guitar player to fulfill a contract. Morrison left UCLA, a lot of biographies claim Morrison dropped out of school but it was only two weeks before he was due to graduate. Morrison headed to Venice Beach and lived on a friend's rooftop where he took, from all reports, a lot of LSD and wrote most of The Doors first two albums worth of songs. Jim then "ran into" Manzarek on the beach and read him Moonlight Drive and the two decided to form a band and "make a million dollars."

The Doors started playing together and working clubs on Sunset Boulevard until they worked their way up to The Whisky a go-go where they became the house band.. One night under a particularly large dose of LSD Morrison added the Oedipal section to The End, they were fired from The Whisky. But they also gained a recording contract from Elektra Records. Morrison went on to become one of the most provocative performers in Rock 'n' Roll creating some of the "firsts" in Rock 'n' Roll, such as being the first rock star arrested on-stage. In 5 years The Doors created some of the classic songs of Rock 'n' Roll, notably, Light My Fire, Hello, I Love You, Roadhouse Blues, L.A. Woman, Love Her Madly and Riders On The Storm. Morrison's destructive urges took him to Paris where he died under mysterious circumstances, which No One Here tries to exploit, exaggerating the mystery surrounding the circumstances of his death. But it worked and the outlines of this myth still haunt Doors fans old and new to this day. Jim Morrison has become the iconic image of a rock star to us, even rock stars look to Morrison for their idea of a rock star.

No One Here Gets Out Alive is a good starter kit for fandom but not the definitive biography, it hedges too much on the side of idolatry. Morrison is the almost superhuman superman that can take the most amount of drugs, gets all the most beautiful women, walks on the edges of buildings without falling, we can see Morrison but the focus isn't pulled clear enough of the outlines of legend.

Cwn_annwn_13 says

To say that many of his fans are morons that get grandiose and delusional about him is an understatement. However I still find that The Doors music stands the test of time and think Morrison was a talented and interesting guy. This book, while good, could have been a lot better. The authors, one of whom knew Morrison personally, interviewed multiple people that were close to him and The Doors, but yet its hard get a true feel for what sort of person Morrison was underneath the front that he put up. Maybe this can't fully be blamed on the authors because I believe Morrison put up a wall/image at a very young age and rarely if ever ventured on the other side of it. One thing I liked about Morrisson is he seemed to have more of an interest in literature and poetry than music, and his long term aspirations were in that direction.

Overall this book is interesting/entertaining. A good portion of it is recounting of Morrisons self destructive drunken antics. The faults are it didn't get on the other side of the mask that Morrison wore, the authors were obviously overly enthusiastic fans. I also find this books habit of quoting/enacting conversations greatly annoying. I realize they interviewed people that were involved in them but how sure can we be of the accuracy of word for word quotations of words that were exchanged 30 years before this book was published.

Justin says

The most popular Doors memoir, and also the shittiest. This book reeks of Sugarman's tunnel vision obsession with Jim Morrison. It's not that the events described aren't factually correct, but you really get the sense that this book was written by a 14 year old poser who understood Jim or the Doors as well as a typical super fan, and no better than that. I still recall my high school English teacher refused to let me write a celebrity bio on Jim because a large-breasted cheerleader in my class asked first. Well, all I can say is, she totally plagiarized this book and read the worst passages aloud, haltingly, to the class and got an A for her efforts. I'm still fuming about it now. I still recall how I thought Bob Dylan's life was SO BORING because he didn't do half as many drugs as Jim did. Well, let it said that I took the measure of a life much differently at age 16 than I do at age 38.

Jason Koivu says

In the age of flower power, the Summer of Love and an era in which a generation sought peace not war, The Doors came out of the darker corners of man's desire.

Harbingers of evil? No. This is about the conduits of humanity in all its beauty and horror.

The Doors embodied yin and yang...

I found an island in your arms

Country in your eyes

Arms that chain

Eyes that lie

In *No One Here Gets Out Alive*, Danny Sugarman has put together the comprehensive legend of Jim Morrison's life, as well as the birth and death of the band that made Morrison godlike in the eyes of millions.

While keyboardist Ray Manzarek, guitarist Robby Krieger and drummer John Densmore were adept musicians, they were a mere back-up band for the wildly enigmatic, charismatic Morrison. Sugarman treats them with deference, but they are relegated to the background here too. The author knows what his readers have come for and he gives it to them.

The phoenix rises and bursts into flame with the blazing sun of the southern Californian, mercurial late '60s music scene as the backdrop.

The sun-drenched Whisky-a-Go-Go on the Sunset Strip in Los Angeles, site of The Doors early triumphs

No One Here Gets Out Alive is "sex, drugs and rock'n'roll" and as a teenager reading this, I LOVED it. So why only 3 stars?

The problem is it's rather sycophantic and not well-written. How could you expect anything more? Danny Sugarman was perhaps the most diehard Doors fan of all time. At the age of 12 he started working for the band answering fan mail. Before he was even out of high school he was managing them. After they dissolved, Sugarman managed Ray Manzarek's solo work. How could this book not be partisan? After all, there's a reason armies are made up of 18-year-olds.

All the negatives aside, this was the Bible to the kid version of me, who was a hardcore Morrison fanatic (he and I share the same birthday, which I thought at the time meant I could pretty much see into his soul...ahhh teenagers), but *No One Here Gets Out Alive* is not a biography about Jesus. It's just about a fucked up kid who landed in a band of fairly accomplished musicians who were willing to put his bad poetry to music, creating songs that found a disenfranchised audience at just the right time. Interesting story about an interesting individual. Really, that's it, even if it means so very much more to many.

If you're a Doors fan, this is essential reading. You've discovered the right place to geek out. If you're a fan of late 60s music, especially the L.A. scene, you'll find plenty to sink your teeth into. If you're everyone else? Then this is not ~~the droid~~ the book you're looking for.

Frankly, this could be given any rating, *Five to one... One in five... No one here gets out alive.*

Mark says

This is the first book I'm putting in my books that changed everything shelf. I first saw a girl reading this on the bus from school in the early 80s. She must've been in high school and I had the vague sense that it was something illicit, part of the drug culture. I also remember a newspaper article that said Morrison called himself the "lizard king," which I associated with satanism. Somehow I got over these childhood prejudices and embraced the Doors' music when I was in high school myself. I was immediately drawn to the darkness of the poetic lyrics, the gothic atmosphere of *The End* and the untrammelled fury of *When The Music's Over*. But reading this book was a revelation. I discovered the Beats here and poets like Rimbaud, authors like

Joyce and the poetry of Morrison himself. The fact that he was a superstar and at the same time an intellectual fascinated me and I tried my best to follow his literary path. Hopkins/Sugerman wrote a hagiography, they just gush with awe for the guy. And it's the sort of thing a 17 year old boy eats up. But the alcoholism and drug abuse, not to mention his cruelty to friends and lovers, strikes this older man now as shabby and self-destructive. There's a price for breaking through to the other side. Back then, however, this book taught me that being a writer and a poet could be COOL and even revolutionary. I have never forgotten that lesson. Nor have I forgotten the rich literary tradition that I stumbled over thanks in large part to a simple (?) biography of a long-dead rock star. RIP Jim.

Lyn says

Fascinating look at The Doors and mainly front man Jim Morrison. Well written too, not just a rock biography.

Bill says

I am a long-time Doors fan. I own all their music and still include it in my music rotation - nearly 40 years after my first exposure to them. Morrison was a very bright man cursed with uncommonly good looks and a ferocious thirst for large quantities of whiskey. The latter led him to an early grave. This book colorfully accounts for his genius and outrageous appetites that led to his early death at age 27. The author dares suggest what Doors fans find heretical: Morrison wasn't a very good singer - he was an awesome shouter and a reasonably good poet. His controversial on-stage antics and his physical beauty were what gave him such a huge public following. Had he survived his youth, he probably would have become a first rate poet/writer. A few years ago, my wife and I visited his grave at Pere la Chaise cemetery in Paris.

Kimberly says

I read this book in 1987 when a huge Doors fan in my high school science class loaned me a cassette tape of music that would forever change what I thought about fire, and pretty much everything else. It became a part of my permanent collection of books and I read it a second time in August 1998 shortly after a news bite in Time magazine made note that the 30-year lease on his grave at Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris would expire on July 6, 2001 because the caretakers were "tired of picking up beer cans and condoms" left in the area there. The magazine tidbit pondered where Jim should go once that happened. Notable suggestions included, The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland, Ohio, Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, London and Oliver Stone's Home in Greater L.A. Graceland was also on the list, but the con given in argument against that was, "Not enough Morrison impersonators - crowd would look Elvis-heavy". I am happy to report that his lease was extended and that fans and curious tourists alike, continue to include the gravesite on their "must-see" list of Paris.

The book is a revealing (as most biographies are) look at Jim's life. I found it extremely tense throughout most of it because of his relentless plunge downward through a haze of booze and drugs. However, Jerry Hopkins and Daniel Sugerman do an excellent job of telling his story in the way true friends would...with brutal honesty and the sharing of poignant memories in a true genius's existence. There is quite a bit of mystery surrounding Jim's death and to this day there are those who whole heartedly believe that Jim did not

die of a heart attack in a bathtub (which is the official reason on record), but that he "quietly disappeared" during that 4th of July weekend in 1971, "to find the peace to write and the freedom of anonymity."

Don't forget to check out the film, "The Doors" for more. Be prepared for Oliver Stone's vision (you either like it or you don't) and the clever casting of Val Kilmer who performs many of the songs himself and being able to differentiate between his voice and Jim's is a true challenge.

Metáfora says

Is everybody in? Is everybody in? Is everybody in? The ceremony is about to begin...

Cormac Zoso says

This is the book that is responsible for making the three surviving members of The Doors rich beyond their dreams. When this came out way back in 1980, The Doors were a band many people had heard of but in general (readers please note i said 'in general') were not one mentioned in the same breath as The Who, Led Zeppelin, The Rolling Stones, and The Beatles, probably the four biggest, most famous, and ultimately most respected and durable bands to come from the '60s. Certainly the sales of their back catalogs bear this out.

But in 1980 after we had been thru the big fade of the huge arena rock dinosaurs (i.e. Zep and The Who would lose original members about this time and while it would effect both while oddly the Stones never were affected by death or desertion of members), after we had been through Punk and the great anti-major-record-label-establishment-rock bands it gave birth to (which for the few bands that made it big such as The Clash soon enough came to find that the excess and pampering they had bemoaned the established dinosaur bands for wallowing in was actually something they liked very well too and wallowed in it blissfully as their music softened like a neglected sharp tool to be left in the middle-of-the-road where major record labels are most happy and would make these post-punk slags filthy rich and filthy lazy just in time for MTV to help make this easily digestible pap more marketable still and them even richer still), and as the cold-sweat horrors of glam/hair metal was just starting to be spat out from the bowels of the major record labels' A&R divisions and gaining purchase on the concrete paths of said-Morrison's beloved Sunset Strip and which no doubt would have the corpse of said-Morrison retching and convulsing with dry heaves in a Paris cemetery or perhaps in a shallow grave outside of Jackson, Mississippi, where years after his alleged death in a Paris bathtub he was ultimately and gleefully stomped into oblivion by a group of good ol' boys wrecked on broken chromosomes, methamphetamine, and Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer, we were lost, all of us, in times that had no direction or clarity and through that fog we witnessed the birthing of the plasticine bust of Ronald Reagan and his bobble-headed second wife (whom he had 'traded-up' for from his bobble-breasted first wife) and at bottom what we truly needed was a four-day weekend of drawn curtains, cable TV, and Quaaludes.

And then came Jim Morrison stumbling, swaggering, shaman-dancing back onto the scene. I would estimate that ninety percent of the people who read this book at the time could not identify a Doors song even with the threatened loss of their limbs on the line. Perhaps, 'Light My Fire' was playing on a radio station somewhere in the United States late at night once a month by some DJ claiming to have drank with the lead singer of that band but other than that The Doors were not news and were relegated to the back racks of Top Forty-driven chain record stores such as Tower, Coconut's, Sam Goody or, for Chicagoans, Flipside and Rose Records where teens would occasionally pull out an LP and turn to their friends with a stoned-stupid laugh

and utter with convinced-cleverness, "Look ... The Doors ... where's The Windows?" and his companions would join him in a group stoned-stupid laugh at the cleverness of us and the dumbness of them.

But by the time this book came into paperback, those same teens had a much-read, much-underlined, and much-passage-memorized copy adding heft to the sagging back pocket of their single pair of Jordache jeans as that copy of the book made the rounds like the town pump. The Doors albums went back into the charts, their songs were played hourly on the computer-assisted playlists of every Metromedia music-format radio station across the country and suddenly Jim Morrison was on the cover of Rolling Stone Magazine with the ever-accurate headline, "He's Hot, He's Sexy, He's Dead" ... leave it to Jann Wenner to spell correctly. And The Doors were back in the spotlight and just as it was the first time around, the second spin of fame had Morrison far outdistancing the other three "backup musicians" in the interest-quotient among the new fans of the band. Not that I think they minded. The royalty checks hitting their mailboxes every month or so must have looked like typos to Krieger, Densmore, and Manzarek, the three who stood behind Morrison as he cavorted through his short life. And suddenly teens were posturing just as the book described ... cheeks sucked in, hips pushed out, and a far-away vague look that gave the lil girls a shiver deep down there.

While the writing I suppose was fairly sophomoric, the authors' writing that is, it was a perfect fit for the stoned, mouth-breathers whose lips beat out the tame and timid tempo of the words. But one can never just blame the authors as I am sure the poor put-upon schlub appointed to 'edit' the 'rock bios' that come through most any publishing house no doubt are instructed to 'dumb it down' to the fourth grade reading requirements of say the Alabama Department of Education. Rock fans can't be expected to read above that level certainly and so sitting around stoned with friends as the one who nearly made it into the honors courses of shop class read aloud to the others as Morrison moaned stoned and beautiful in the background, the new disciples cotton-mouthed and hanging on every word of either the singer or the reader since attempting to include both among the frayed, arcing, and sputtering synapses would have been a multitasking death wish for this crowd. But it got the story across and ultimately that is all that matters unless you're begging to be Ernest Hemingway or Judith Krantz.

So for the stories, the myths, and more, this book hit home for a new generation that would later blushingly admit to their roommate in the repressed homosexuality of a frat house bedroom as they tried to decide whether to pop their collars for that night's date rape that they, yes, they, the cool and effeminate boy exchanging loving looks in the one mirror in said bedroom "were into The Doors for a summer" whilst again the Lizard King clutches at the memory of his bloated heart considering the prospect that his work was ultimately judged by the same selfish swine that caused the S&L crash a short time later.

However, at bottom and in the end beautiful friend The Doors climbed that ladder of fame nearly to the level of the 'Big Four' from the '60s while securing themselves a hallowed place in the fable of American Rock Music. Well above Grand Funk Railroad but too weird to pry-bar their name alongside those faces on the big rock. As for now, well they recently received a classy documentary effort shown by no less than PBS American Masters and narrated by that acting-oddball of a self-proclaimed Doors' fan Johnny Depp (the more you know about him, the more you gotta like him) ... sadly this leaves them somewhere near the middle of the road though please note that it was just PBS and no doubt was financed through the sales of hash brownies amongst the employees.
