



Meet Me in the Bathroom: Rebirth and Rock and Roll in New York City 2001-2011

Lizzy Goodman

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Joining the ranks of the classics *Please Kill Me*, *Our Band Could Be Your Life*, and *Can't Stop Won't Stop*, an intriguing oral history of the post-9/11 decline of the old-guard music industry and rebirth of the New York rock scene, led by a group of iconoclastic rock bands.

In the second half of the twentieth-century New York was the source of new sounds, including the Greenwich Village folk scene, punk and new wave, and hip-hop. But as the end of the millennium neared, cutting-edge bands began emerging from Seattle, Austin, and London, pushing New York further from the epicenter. The behemoth music industry, too, found itself in free fall, under siege from technology. Then 9/11/2001 plunged the country into a state of uncertainty and war—and a dozen New York City bands that had been honing their sound and style in relative obscurity suddenly became symbols of glamour for a young, web-savvy, forward-looking generation in need of an anthem.

Meet Me in the Bathroom charts the transformation of the New York music scene in the first decade of the 2000s, the bands behind it—including The Strokes, The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, LCD Soundsystem, Interpol, and Vampire Weekend—and the cultural forces that shaped it, from the Internet to a booming real estate market that forced artists out of the Lower East Side to Williamsburg. Drawing on 200 original interviews with James Murphy, Julian Casablancas, Karen O, Ezra Koenig, and many others musicians, artists, journalists, bloggers, photographers, managers, music executives, groupies, models, movie stars, and DJs who lived through this explosive time, journalist Lizzy Goodman offers a fascinating portrait of a time and a place that gave birth to a new era in modern rock-and-roll.

Meet Me in the Bathroom: Rebirth and Rock and Roll in New York City 2001-2011

Details

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From Reader Review Meet Me in the Bathroom: Rebirth and Rock and Roll in New York City 2001-2011 for online ebook

Mark Graham says

Will there ever be another "scene" like the one that Lizzy Goodman describes in MMITB? Whether it was Seattle for grunge, the Sunset Strip for hair metal, Boston for '80s era "college" music, Laurel Canyon in the early '70s, Motown in the '60s, or any other number of scenes, so much of music history can be traced back to a bunch of bands emanating from one central location playing stylistically-similar jams. MMITB does a tremendous job of capturing the dynamic LES/rock scene of the early Aughts, which very well may be the last "scene" of its kind (due to technology, loss of monoculture, corporate consolidation, etc.). The oral history format is perfectly implemented here, as Goodman got musicians, publicists, industry professionals, bloggers, and groupies to dish about this incredible era. I can't think of anyone --save for maybe Carlos D-- who I wanted to hear from but didn't. BRAVO! ??

(Oh, if you're reading this book and you want to listen to all the music that's mentioned, I made a Spotify playlist of EVERY SINGLE SONG MENTIONED IN THE BOOK for that very purpose:
<https://open.spotify.com/user/unclegr...>)

El_kiablo says

This book is fine. It is also a complete existential nightmare.

Look: oral histories tend to be very readable, especially if the people being interviewed have big personalities. Sure enough, this book is very readable because it's full of a bunch of successful/inspired/crazy people saying interesting things.

But while reading Meet Me In The Bathroom is a pleasant enough experience it is also a stone-cold bummer because: damn, man, I don't want my generation to descend up its own asshole the same way that the Boomers did.

Look: I was in college when a lot of these bands released their first records. I remember the Strokes being played at house parties. I fell in love with Interpol during 2005, which was the first year that I was living completely on my own, two and a half thousand miles from where I grew up. Hell, the National - who are interviewed in the book but not really discussed - have been my favorite band for going on a decade.

But it's a big leap to go from "I like these bands" to "these bands were important. They Meant Something."

Did these bands change things? Sure, why not. But you know who else changed things? Reality TV and Starbucks and Pornhub and SpongeBob Squarepants. I'm told that a butterfly can change the world if it flaps its wings hard enough.

Oh, and 9/11 changed things - and that is covered here, but maybe not as fully as it should be. Outside of an anecdote from Connor Oberst about playing an anti-Bush song on Jay Leno's talk show this book mostly steers clear of politics - which seems insane to me? I feel like the two wars were a really dominant story during this time period and their complete absence from this story feels strange to me. But I guess the author

just had to make room for a fortieth story about how all of these dudes loved doing cocaine at hip clubs like third (or fifth) generation photocopies of Led Zeppelin. But I digress...

Look, I don't mind if the people that were in these bands talk about themselves as if they were important; its a given that their first person perspective will be skewed and they will be unreliable narrators. But the fact that *NONE* of the people here seem to see the writing on the wall is just annoying; everyone seems to be in denial about the fact that even the biggest bands are only super-famous for fifteen minutes now because there's so much media vying for our attention all the time that it's impossible to keep focusing on the same thing for too long... Oh, and also: 'the biggest bands' are really only mid-size anymore because the monoculture has fractured and its impossible for a single artist to speak to everyone anymore... I mean, hell, the Stokes were big, but I know a ton of people who completely missed them because they were exclusively into Spearboxx/The Love Below that year, but of course that wouldn't be covered here because OutKast is from Atlanta and thus out of this book's purview - but again: I digress.

My point is this: its all well and good to document an interesting scene after its passed. But we can't over-mythologize it, and we can't take it too seriously. At the end of the day the Strokes were a band that had one pretty decent record and then they more or less went away. That's great! That's more than most bands can claim, and I get why people would want to know more about their time in the spotlight. But that isn't enough to treat them like world-changing icons; doing so is both inaccurate and also unfair to them.

If you're in my generation and want to know more about the bands of your adolescence then by all means read this book. But while you are doing that you can never lose sight of this simple truth: we have to be better than the Boomers, and that means steering clear of self-important posturing about how influential and revolutionary and overall great we were. We were fine, and quite frankly, that's good enough.

Matthew says

"We always thought that the misfits were the stars," journalist/author Rob Sheffield waxes early on in Lizzy Goodman's exhilarating and comprehensive oral history *Meet Me in the Bathroom*. It's one of many great quotes from an exhaustive catalog of these "misfits" - the rockers, writers and artists who helped shape one of the most iconic and important eras of rock music. Or so is the opinion of this particular reviewer.

To be fair I am of a similar age to many of those documented in Goodman's novel and found much solace in the music created during that time, so consider me a touch biased. It's doubtful *Meet Me in the Bathroom* will have the same profound effect on others as it did me, but I suppose that depends on one's relationship with the music produced in NYC during the weird, wild aughts (and even the few years preceding them). That being said it's also doubtful one would take on a 600+ page behemoth unless they were at the very least casual fans of many of these bands (The Strokes, Interpol, Yeah Yeah Yeahs to name a few). It's safe to say they shan't be disappointed.

Meet Me in the Bathroom is a electrifying read, consisting of many tales already known, as well as several whose details were always foggy or second-hand at best. It begins by chronicling the limbo period of the mid-to-late-90's major label gold rush, whereupon alternative music had been saturated to the point of banality, only to be usurped by rap-rock and mainstream pop. Out of those ashes rose several bands poised to save the day, from the much-hyped and maligned Jonathan Fire*Eater to the even more hyped and aforementioned Strokes, and countless others in between. It's a thrill ride reliving the moments these bands created; to hear the retelling of their history straight from the horses' mouth just makes it that much better.

"In many ways I'll miss the good old days," Julian Casablancas sang on "Someday", one of the many classic cuts from the Strokes iconic debut *Is This It*. It's as though he were predicting the future, when he and his misfit cohorts would get together and recant their glory days. And for when fervent followers blissfully recall those times when we were young.

Oh man did we have fun.

Sara says

Everyone feels like their college music scene was the most special, but ours at least now has a killer book to go with it. This book was everything I wanted it to be.

Jamie says

They're not overselling the comparison of this to other music oral histories in the intro - I enjoyed it every bit as much as *Our band could be your life* and *Can't stop won't stop*, and ALMOST as much as *Please Kill Me*. It sent me to Spotify again and again to relisten to stuff I hadn't listened to in a while, and stoked my already burning LCD Soundsystem fire.

What's funny is, though James Murphy comes across as a dick, his dickishness is kind of awesome and I love him all the more. Ryan Adams, also comes off as a dick, and I still don't like him. I think the difference is : the other people AROUND James Murphy (with the exception of Goldsworthy and Holmes) seem to be on his side, while the people around Ryan Adams in his "lost years" don't have a lot of good things to say. I think it's the difference between "Yeah, that guy is kind of an asshole, but he's my asshole" and "God that guy again? He's such an asshole."

Millie says

Literally everyone did more coke than me in the early aughts.

Big Al says

Oral history in the style of *Please Kill Me* hyping up a more recent New York music scene. Not nearly as iconic or fun to read about as the 70s punk scene in *Please Kill Me*, but still an entertaining and nostalgic look back on a time (not that long ago) when rock music still mattered. Right from the beginning I was not feeling the over the top glorification of New York City (THE ONLY PLACE IN THE WORLD that matters for cool people apparently), nor did I think the long page count was justified. I picked this up because of *The Strokes*, so I enjoyed following the career trajectory of this band along with the gossipy commentary. Made me appreciate *The Yeah Yeah Yeahs* a little more, but still couldn't convince me to care about *Interpol*!

Sydney says

3.5 stars

I'm a huge Strokes fan, so when I heard this book was coming out, I knew I had to read it. I also really like the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, The White Stripes, and TV on the Radio, while being a casual fan of most of the other bands featured in this book.

I enjoyed it for the most part, but I did have some issues, the format being the main one.

It's told in an interview style, where the person's name precedes their quote. For example:

Julian Casablancas: quote.

Karen O: quote.

This wasn't a huge issue when I knew who the people were, but there were a ton I'd never heard of before, like many of the journalists and members of band I wasn't as familiar with. There is a cast of characters at the beginning, but it was a pain to keep going back to look who everyone was five times every page, so I eventually just stopped doing it.

I think the format worked well at some points, because we were able to hear everything directly from the people who had the experiences. But in the cases of the people I wasn't familiar with, I wasn't really able to get a good idea of who they were as people.

There were a lot of times when I wasn't incredibly interested in what was happening, usually because, again, I wasn't familiar with everyone. This is much more my fault than Goodman's.

I think if you're a fan of some of these bands, I would recommend checking it out from the library and read until you get kind of bored, at which point you should go to the index to find something that you will find interesting. That's a good thing about this book: it's easy to skip around and only read small sections and not be confused.

I'm glad I read it, but I'm not sure how often I'll pick it back up. I did buy this the day it was released at full price, and I kind of wish I had just borrowed it from the library.

Jeremy says

The low rating is based on two factors:

- 1). I love oral histories but the actual structure used in this book is extremely hard to follow. People pop in and out without any reintroduction or explanation for why they are there. Some anecdotes are placed right in the middle of longer overarching stories with no point or connection.
- 2). The people covered in this story are just not that compelling. As opposed to say *Please Kill Me*, or *Other Hollywood*, a lot of the stories told are thorough snore feats that alternate between doing too much coke, or having too much sex. I guess that is cool, but that won't sustain a 600 page book.

If you are a super fan of the Strokes, or Yeah Yeah Yeahs, or Jonathan Fire*Eater, this book. If you are looking to read a compelling oral history I would check elsewhere.

RB says

Message to Julian Casablancas and Ryan Adams: set a date somewhere chill, roll countless joints, smoke them, kiss and make up.

Now, the book . . .

"Meet Me in the Bathroom: Or How to Be Hypocrites and Pick on Ryan Adams," by Lizzy Goodman has everything an oral history needs to be spectacular but instead it falls for the gossip, the drugs, the sex, the weirdness, the hipster bickering. And it does this while ignoring any valuable information on the music these (mostly) great bands made. If you're a teenager or enjoy reading about the sex and drugs parts of your music heroes, you may love this book. For the book's many faults, the one thing it unarguably does well is transport the reader to that place, that particular time in rock history. But what did I take away from this book? That Carlos D likes to strut around with 9 curvy women while high on ecstasy and talking shit to Kings of Leon? That all these bands came close to breaking up for similar reasons? I didn't take a single thing of import from this book save a few interesting asides about musicians I like. But if you were in a band around this time and you by all accounts kicked a large number of asses (TV On the Radio, The Walkmen, etc.) but never succumbed to the party lifestyle well then in Lizzy Goodman's eyes your band barely exists. Even Ryan Adams who was at his worst during this time period is treated as a pariah. By the time I turned to page 500 I had realized that I still hadn't learned or heard a thing about "It's Blitz", "Our Love to Admire", "Dear Science" and the list goes on, and while some of those bands and albums get a passing mention it's only that, in passing, and these are some of the best albums of that period, completely ignored because the band members weren't doing blow with Courtney Love or were a bit late to the game.

So sure you may have a blast reading this and hearing about the drug and sex habits of your favourite musicians but if you're interested in the music they made, this book is the complete opposite of that and should be avoided--if a book exists similar to this that focuses on music, please tell me, I'd love to read it. One last thing: Gideon Yago, "You're just the afterbirth that slithered out on your mother's filth . . . they should've put you in a glass-jar on a mantelpiece. Where were you when everyone was making such great music, where were you Gideon? That scene's been had, it's gone, you lose, taaaaalent Gideon, talent you boy . . . "

Stevie Dunbar says

Where is the bathroom

Zachary Houle says

I feel exhausted after reading Lizzy Goodman's compelling oral history of the aught's music scene in New York City, Meet Me in the Bathroom. I read the book in mostly one sitting, and it took me, I'd estimate, a little more than 10 hours to get through. There's 640 pages in the book, according to the publisher's information (my copy was downloaded on the Kindle), and, man, do you feel it. Practically no stone is left

unturned in this account of what it was like to be a musician in the 2000s in New York.

The book largely focuses on the careers of bands such as the Strokes, Interpol, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs and LCD Soundsystem. I found the book to be fascinating, even though I only was really a fan of LCD and only familiar with their work. I really felt a sense of nostalgia in reading this book, what it was like for me to be post-university degree and still regularly consuming music. (I haven't listened to an album in months, and I've turned more into a reader.) The book also touches on the copycat bands that came from elsewhere in the wake of the Strokes' success?—?and had far more success than the Strokes themselves did?—?but also takes some detours into how technology and file sharing really impacted how major labels scooped up bands. There's also an insightful chapter on bloggers and the role they had in popularizing these bands, and these blogs actually had a much bigger role than I would have imagined.

Read more here: <https://festivalpeak.com/a-review-of-...>

zan says

I really enjoyed this book and its trip down memory lane (or at least as many memories as we could possibly retain from that era), but can't say how much of that was because I remember half these people and places first-hand. Like: seeing Interpol at Brownies, or Mooney Suzuki at Tiswas, or being at Mercury Lounge for a Delays show next to Sarah Lewitinn, or reading every week about Misshapes on some blog. Even Lit, a bar I used to go to all the time but have already nearly forgotten about, loomed large on many pages. Being there brought these pages more to life for me. Honestly I skimmed much of the LCD Soundsystem stuff because it was so not a part of the NYC I remember. Still: a great & complete oral history of everything that spun out of that time and place.

Izzy says

Last spring, I had my wisdom teeth removed. My oral surgeon was young-ish, and he was playing a Vampire Weekend album in the operating room. As the anesthesiologist did her thing, we ~~began to discuss~~ I launched into a monologue on my very complicated feelings about that band, and the next thing I knew I was waking up, no surgeon in sight, completely, fully, even ragingly, ready to complete my train of thought. It was definitely a mental coitus interruptus situation and I'm still mad about it. I am also still mad that the surgeon told me wisdom teeth removal is a "young person's game."

A few weeks ago, I caught Henry Rollins on his latest tour. Before that night, I had no idea how wild the story of how he became Black Flag's frontman is. He had driven from D.C. to New York for one of their shows, and they invited him onstage to sing one song. A few days later, he got a call from the band asking him to audition, and the rest is musical and spoken word history.

Meet Me in the Bathroom is about SO many things. The author herself claims it's really about New York City, and that's not wrong, but so are thousands of other novels, records, films, paintings, lives—it's New York, you can't turn over a cobblestone without finding 37 riveting stories beneath it. The reason I related those seemingly unrelated anecdotes above is because to me, the main characters are the incredibly complicated dynamics of one's personal musical taste and Lady Luck. Some of these bands were just at the right place, at the right time.

I am the target demographic of this book, and I'm not sure if I've ever experienced being such a...bullseye. I remember being stuck in the backseat of a car. A friend of mine was going on and on about the Strokes and how they were so fucking *cool* and how he was going to dress just like them. Then he smoked weed out of a bowl using an actual button as a filter, like a plastic button from a coat, so his opinion didn't really hold a lot of weight. Another friend of mine latched onto the Karen O persona like a barnacle. You guys, I witnessed so many terrible haircuts that Karen herself could barely pull off. I've always been a little "oh it's more about the music, not the look" (which I realize has its own issues), so I didn't really get sucked into that vibe at the time. However, something that has always been a potent drug to me is the allure of a "scene." (FOMO is real you guys.) So I wanted to read this book.

(Sidenote on FOMO: this book gave it to me. Hard. I lived a mere 2.5 hours north of this scene and missed it completely. Oh, I listened to the music and did my own thing, but you know what I mean.)

Anyway, back to *this* music scene, in this place, at this time. One of the most interesting aspects of *Meet Me in the Bathroom* is how Lizzy Goodman introduces contributing factors I had never considered. For example, it was *right* on the cusp of the internet takeover. That sentence alone encapsulates: the onset of Napster and the eventual complete reconfiguration of the entire music industry; a new spotlight on the opinions of bloggers, who would become the top tastemakers; and the dismantling of established journalistic structures (including factoring in who was prescient enough to jump on the bandwagon re: online content). The theme of internet as catalyst is huge. We're all cozily set in our current media consumption ways, so it's easy to forget just how fucking different it was! If you even remember a time pre-internet! I mean, I watched a movie from 5 years ago and I noticed they were using Facebook wrong. The way we get information changes drastically and quickly these days—we're used to it. But the early 2000s were a time of enormous change in this regard. Enormous. Some people like change and roll with it; some people don't. Aside from the internet, this was a pre, during, AND post-911 New York. It was a New York dealing with a lot of political and economic change: gentrification, getting "cleaned up." Even small things like stringent new cabaret laws added spice to the stew. One claim I have a hard time getting behind though is that there was no real New York music scene for years before this one. I'm sure there was, it just wasn't *yours*.

Ok, so there's those huge themes. Huge themes like that are invariably accompanied by dozens of smaller themes. And what I LOVED loved about *Meet Me in the Bathroom* is the way Goodman structured the interviews to unveil everything she wanted to include. Seriously, it is a monstrous editing feat. Major Russian nesting doll status. Props to Lizzy and her team. You get the story of the Strokes and how they revitalized the scene, plus the contrast of the whole DFA/LCD thing. Those are the two major story arcs, and they are red-carpet-unrolled against the backdrop of the aforementioned climate of 2000s New York. Once that trunk is established, the other branches blossom: the tales of the YYYs, Interpol, TV on the Radio, and many others. The whole thing is so incestuous that it has to be this way. And THEN, within that context, the tidbits of hedonism, relationships, good feelings, bad feelings, praise, jealousy, ego-tripping—that all comes out. People fucked each other over just as often as they helped skyrocket careers. I read somewhere that Julian Casablancas said he didn't love this book because there were too many non-insider opinions. But I appreciated the takes of journalists, managers, publicists, bloggers, and Gideon Yago. They added a fullness I would've missed had their voices been omitted. Even the descriptions of drugs and general hedonism opened up space to read between the lines, letting you form your own opinion on what constituted cool, what made a rock star, what made a scene.

Which brings me to Vampire Weekend. I have complicated feelings! There's probably a band you feel a type of way about too. When I first heard them, I definitely scoffed. Like, what are they even. Now I kind of love them? That whole discussion with the hipster oral surgeon was about holding a mirror to your musical tastes. Of dissecting the roots of what makes you love music, letting yourself like something that doesn't necessarily

fall into the established wheelhouse of what you THINK you should like, and everything that stems from that thought process. I remember being like, "it forced me to admit to myself that...I could be wrong about cool things, you know?" (Yoooo, nitrous though.) Towards the end of the book, specifically during the Vampire Weekend sections, something super interesting is brought up: that millennials, unlike those from the generations right before, don't hold such a die-hard loyalty to a specific style. They (THE INTERNET) had access to a huge variety of music, and no one told them only these one or two things were cool. And by this point, they knew how to use it to their advantage. Ezra Koenig is no joke.

Which brings me to Ezra Koenig. My other favorite thing about this book was cobbling together character profiles from the interviews. Ezra was one of my faves. Cerebral, fresh, and just...Ezra is going to do what he is going to do, and very cleanly and successfully at that. Tunde and Jaleel from TV on the Radio were my other faves. They were so real and funny. I left this book with a whole new opinion of Julian Casablancas, too (in a good way). Oh, and I loved Paul Banks from Interpol. Most of these characters are eloquent and funny. The stories ABOUT Carlos from Interpol were also pretty great. OH and I did laugh a lot at what the Kings of Leons guys had to say. And James Murphy, omg. I love LCD and could write several paragraphs on him after reading this but I'll spare you guys. He is one of those assholes I could easily be really good friends with.

That's the other thing about *Meet Me in the Bathroom*. It's super fun to read. I wanted to include all of the above overanalytical bullshit to counteract some of the claims that it's just about sex and drugs and being cool. It's not. But that stuff is in there, and fuck yeah it's fun to read about. Each chapter ends on on a mini-cliffhanger, and it just keeps you flipping pages. Pretty soon you're lugging around a 500-page hardcover, and gladly.

Andy says

The musical-era biography subgenre may be my favorite type of reading material. That and/or artist memoirs/autobiographies. *Our Band Could Be Your Life* remains a seminal experience for how much music it led me to discover and how the ideals espoused by the 80s punks whose careers the book chronicled, and how their lives and work were all intertwined, deeply affected me, inspired me, and/or served as fodder for appropriation/regurgitation.

Prior to the publication of *Meet Me in the Bathroom* the function of books like this for me had always been to connect with periods I missed, periods I felt disappointed to have missed; I used to sing about having been "born at the wrong time." In hindsight, that was kind of stupid of me, especially since while initially reading the Azerrad book I was living in the middle of a similarly seminal movement and didn't realize it.

Meet Me in the Bathroom is the first good* entry in this subgenre to cover a period during which I was an active, enthusiastic consumer of the art being created. In fact, there are only two albums in the book that I hadn't intentionally engaged with almost immediately upon release--the YYYs' and Jonathan Fire*Eater's first EPs. However, until reading the book, I had completely unaware how much context I'd missed as a naive midwestern boy listening from afar, vaguely imagining an NYC I wouldn't visit until the whole thing had mostly concluded (actually well before 2011, which I'll get to). The now-renown bands making innovative music in turn-of-the-millennium New York City were just as intertwined and interconnected as the underground punks in the 80s, if not more so. The constant proximity of so much simultaneous ingenious--and occasional genius--is amazing, and far from coincidental.

*I also lived through and actively participated in the late 90s/early-2000s emo era as chronicled in *Nothing Feels Good* by Andy Greenwald--also a frequently quoted journalist in *MMitB*. But... most of that music sucks now, and that book kind of sucks; it was written too soon, before the phenomenon had concluded. However, it's literally the only thing Greenwald has produced that I haven't loved. Anyway...*

The subtitle *Rebirth and Rock & Roll in New York City 2001-2011* is a partial misnomer. The ebook version is about 550 pages long. Around 475 of those pages span the years 2000 to 2004 or so, rather than the neater, nicer, more eminently marketable "2001-2011." Still, Lizzy Gordon's oral history is incredibly structured, built using Rashomon-style collective recollections of two culturally separate but simultaneously-occurring NYC scenes as throughlines. One follows the alleged "rock saviors," documenting the foundation, emergence, and ascendance of the Strokes, the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, and Interpol, while the other thread chronicles those of dance-rock behemoth DFA Records and its primary export, LCD Soundsystem. Many bands within the orbit of those two blazing suns are covered as well, generally any major act that hailed from or frequently visited the region that received a Pitchfork BNM. There is a massive quantity of astounding and confounding information here, yet Gordon keeps the dual narratives tightly focused, for the most part wisely avoiding indulgence in inconsequential tangents.

The remaining pages are devoted to the aftermath of the bands that broke through during that time, with some additional lip service paid to the next generation, mainly Vampire Weekend, but also Grizzly Bear and The National, though quotes from members of the latter two are mostly used for solely for scene-setting. If I have any negative criticism, I wish Gordon had devoted either fewer pages or many more to the bands from later in the decade. And I wish she'd talked to Sufjan Stevens, who was hanging with those crowds at the time, and whose reliably strange perspective would have added an entirely different take on the events. Also, the conclusion came too soon. The book ends with LCD and the Strokes' first shows at MSG, which took place on back-to-back nights. You know, the once-legendary "final" LCD show. The book ends there, yet we know both bands, plus Interpol and the YYYs, are still around slugging it out, trying to reach, or intentionally not reach, the pop summit none of them quite did.

So, back to the context I didn't have as a midwestern high school/college student listening to this stuff 10-15 years ago. All these artists, separately monolithic in my mind, knew each other, collaborated, loved/hated/dated each other. That changes everything! But the real surprise here mainly this: they all lived hard, used and abused alcohol and drugs, loads and loads of drugs, all kinds. With the exception of the Strokes, none of these bands seemed particularly hedonistic, and certainly weren't marketed as such. The Strokes were so characteristically casual and cool about it that it seemed somehow irrelevant. They were indestructible. No people with such perfect birthnames as those could ever die. However, apparently everyone in that scene was, to some degree, a fucked up dirtbag, so much so that I frequently wondered how all of them survived. How did these people live, and yet so many of the icons of the 60s, 70s, 80s, and 90s wound up dead? I'm guessing the availability and social acceptability of recovery programs is a big factor. Destigmatization.

Perhaps the most disheartening, disappointing takeaway is the book's revelation that DFA/LCD kingpin James Murphy, long held up as the Kind Uncle of Indie Rock, is, in fact, not kind. At all. No, the dude comes off here as an entitled, vindictive monster, a petulant genius baby willing to completely sever ties with and/or destroy anyone who stood/stands in his way, no matter how strong those friendships had previously been. He ruined multiple careers and takes no responsibility for it. People openly refer to Murphy as a sociopath. This would be more difficult to handle if his music was just a little less than absolutely, transcendently perfect, which it isn't, and so we'll probably just continue to accept and forgive the artistic fascism required for this particular man to achieve that world-beating level of creative work. And, honestly, the fact that Murphy was able to successfully design, cultivate, and maintain this image probably means that he's an even bigger

genius than we previously assumed.

Meet Me in the Bathroom rules. It's gossipy, dirty, and addictive. I blew through it in less than 48 hours. If you consider yourself a fan of any one of the bands mentioned above, this is required reading.

One last note: the book ends with a funny quote from Julian Casablancas, uttered on stage at a huge show in southern California. When he said that, this is the truth, and I mention it with equal parts pride and irony: I was there.
