



Under Their Thumb: How a Nice Boy from Brooklyn Got Mixed Up with the Rolling Stones (and Lived to Tell About It)

Bill German

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"German is party to all sort of Stones' doings, many of which are enjoyable, quite a few of which are scandalous. **Great rock 'n' roll Babylon stuff.**"

- Booklist (Starred Review)

"The **epic tale** of an obsessive teenager who launched a *Rolling Stones* fanzine and spent the next two decades capturing the band's whirlwind metamorphosis from behind the scenes....**First-rate, firsthand account** of the world's greatest rock 'n' roll band, and a disenchanted chronicle of its increasingly crass commercialization."

- Kirkus Reviews

As a teenager, Bill German knew exactly what he wanted to do with his life: chronicle the career and adventures of his favorite rock band, the Rolling Stones. And in 1978, on his sixteenth birthday, he set out to make his dream a reality. Feverishly typed in his Brooklyn bedroom, and surreptitiously printed in his high school's mimeograph room German's Stones-only newsletter, *Beggars Banquet*, was born. His teachers discouraged it, his parents dismissed it as a phase, and his disco-loving classmates preferred the Bee Gees, but, for German, this primitive, pre-Internet fanzine was a labor of love. And a fateful encounter with his idols on the streets of New York soon proved his efforts weren't in vain.

Impressed with *Beggars Banquet*, the Stones gave the 'zine instant cred on the rock scene by singing its praises—and by inviting German to hang with the band. At first a fish out of water in the company of rock royalty, German found himself spilling orange juice on a priceless rug in Mick Jagger's house and getting pegged as a narc by pals of Keith Richards and Ron Wood. But before long he became a familiar fixture in the inner sanctum, not just reporting Stones stories but living them. He was a player in the Mick-versus-Keith feud and was an eyewitness to Keith's midlife crisis and Ron's overindulgences. He even had a reluctant role in covering up Mick's peccadilloes. "In the span of a few months," German recalls, "I'd gone from wanting to know everything about my favorite rock stars to knowing too much."

In this warts-and-all book, which includes many never-before-seen photographs, German takes us to the Stones' homes, recording sessions, and concerts around the world. He charts the band's rocky path from the unthinkable depths of a near breakup to the obscenely lucrative heights of their blockbuster tours. And ultimately, German reveals why his childhood dream come true became a passion he finally had to part with.

Under Their Thumb is an up-close and extremely personal dispatch from the amazing, exclusive world of the Rolling Stones, by someone who was lucky enough to live it—and sober enough to remember it all.



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