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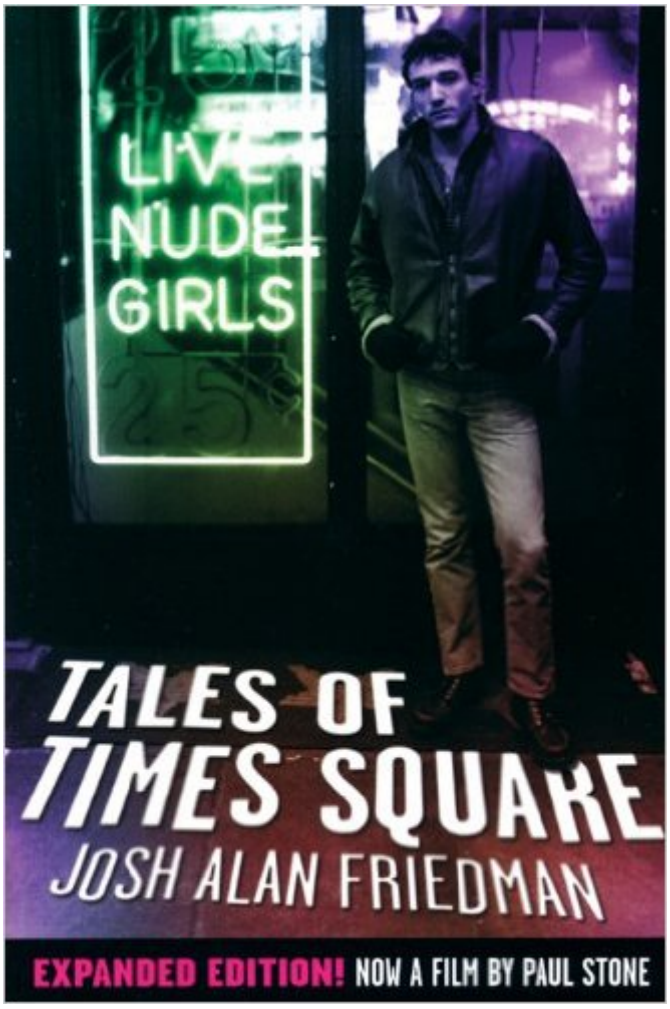
Tales Of Times Square: Expanded Edition



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Synopsis

â œFriedman has drawn a vivid picture of the Times Square area and its denizens. He writes about the porn palaces with live sex shows, and the men and women who perform in them, prostitutes and their pimps, the runaways who will likely be the next decade's prostitutes, the clergymen who fight the smut merchants and the cops who feel impotent in the face of the judiciary.â •â ”Publishers WeeklyThis classic account of the ultra-sleazy, pre-Disneyfied era of Times Square is now the subject of a documentary film of the same name to be theatrically released this year. With this edition, Tales of Times Square returns to print with seven new chapters.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Aside from the covertly racist remarks, Tales of Times Square is great fun. It's a chronicle of the recent history of the classic red-light district that was as part of Americana as mom and apple pie. With stark detail, down to the exact addresses of various brothels, porn houses and other wild joints; it feels as if a walk down the old Forty Deuce and Eighth Avenue is taking place as the pages go by. A natural born writer, Friedman's eye for detail is amazing and he delivers the goods.During its height of splendid glory it was a neighborhood that fostered more orgasms than any other making it somewhat depressing that this cultural relic known as Times Square has now been hijacked by Disney, the big developers and large corporations. Friedman does a quality job in touching on the underlying politico-economic realities responsible for the destruction of one of the last places that refused to be gentrified.With a keen eye for the hilariously absurd and the interesting denizens populating the Square from roughly the mid 60s to the mid 80s, Friedman offers up funny and

enthralling stories involving strippers, johns, swing clubbers, prostitutes, shoeshines, religious folks, kiosk workers, pornstars and others. One startling fact broached is that in the 1970s during a typical summer night it wasn't unusual to see a thousand old school style hookers plying their trade along Eighth Avenue. Today it's scarcely possible to imagine given the plethora of cops occupying America's cities.Certainly the most indelible section of Tales of Times Square has to be the description of the famous -- or infamous depending on a person's predilections -- east coast swing club Plato's Retreat. The wild shenanigans documented are simply unbelievable. These chapters are worth the price of the book alone, although some may feel a shower's in order after reading some of this stuff.The last bastion of a truly honky-tonk atmosphere is over. As Friedman points out it's time to make way for Mickey and Minnie Mouse. In an age of sterile corporate strip malls, Tales of Times Square is a reminder that in at least one neighborhood things used to be quite different.

When you watch a film like Taxi Driver, there's a certain scumminess and grit to New York that really doesn't exist anymore. Nowadays the place is a giant tourist wonderland and Times Square is full of theaters and chain restaurants. This is really about a time before New York was safe. This is Times Square when it was full of porn theaters and peep shows, and when subway cars were covered with graffiti. It's a lot less safe, and a lot less clean. And this isn't really just about the Square itself, but really the people behind the scum. Overall a good read.

The book was nice. It lightly covered the era, places & times. I think the expanded area about Al Goldstein was really to negative. Just my 2 Cents. But if your courious You should reed the book & More. It's only a limited partial view. Of a history & culture heard about & being lost. But very important to generations that only heard about it or might hear about it in years to come. Lenny Waller former operator Hell Fire Club NYC

Now Times Square, 42nd Street (aka The Deuce), 8th Avenue and even The Port Authority Bus Terminal itself were sleazy as hell and dangerous and full of porn palaces and whores and hustlers and pimps in the late 1970s and 1980s - oh I miss it so (kidding). Somehow concurrent with that just described a myth developed of beautiful teen-aged white girls from Minnesota running away from home, hopping on a Greyhound bus to NYC, and immediately being forced into prostitution by evil black pimps. And who was there was to save them? Catholic Priest Bruce Ritter and Covenant House! Ritter so successfully peddled this tale in quest of fame and contributions even then President Reagan publically called him "The Good Shepard of Times Square". But none (or mostly

none) of it was true, and the author does a good job of exposing this and I must say Ritter's depiction never squared with my own experience with that part of town. Truth is Ritter ran a home for troubled teens but they weren't sweet Nordics he was saving from debauchery they were most likely black or Puerto Rican youths from NYC some fleeing dysfunctional family situations and some even kicked out due to drug use, bad behavior etc. Not that such children don't need assistance and kudos to those who will aid them, but the reality of the situation was nothing like the picture painted... and Father Bruce was eventually forced out when it came to light he was having sexual relations with some of his youthful charges...

Perhaps because I now work there & was raised near it I see more into this book than some. But it is an interesting, behind the scenes look at a period of NYC history that the city would love to forget & while we wax nostalgic about it now, hated while we lived it. A funny, point blank, eye opening read.

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