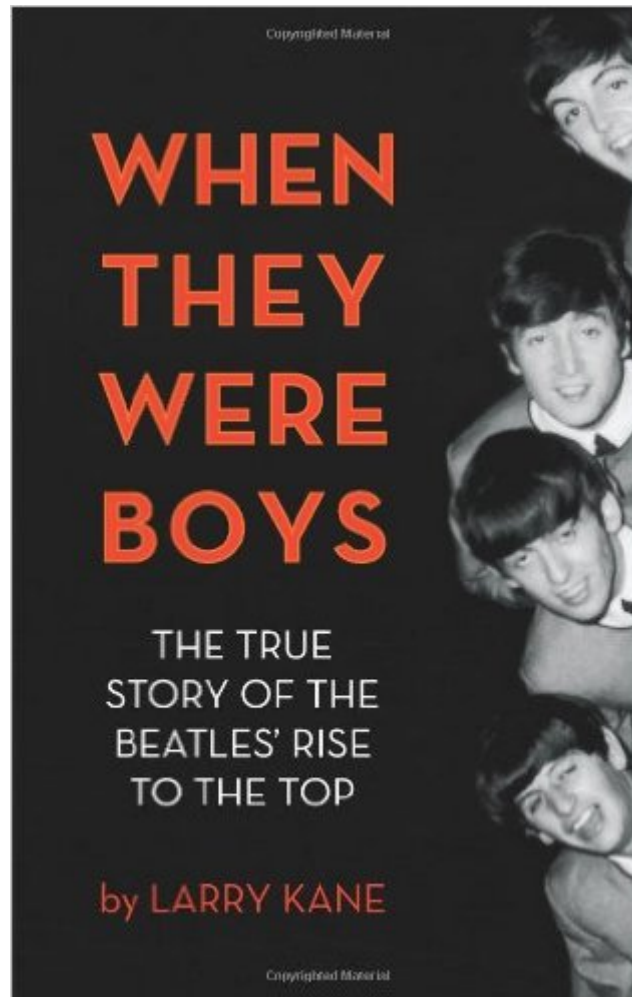


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When They Were Boys: The True Story Of The Beatles' Rise To The Top



Synopsis

This is the story of the Beatles' harrowing rise to fame: focusing on that seven-year stretch from the time the boys met as teenagers to early 1964, when the Fab Four made their momentous first appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show. From the boys' humble beginnings in Liverpool, to the cellars of Hamburg, *When They Were Boys* includes stories never before told, including the heartbreaks and the lucky breaks. Included are an eyewitness account of that first meeting between Lennon and McCartney, the inside story of how Ringo replaced Pete Best, an exploration of the brilliant but troubled soul of manager Brian Epstein, and the real scoop on their disastrous first visit to Germany and the death of Stu Sutcliffe. With an eye for life in Liverpool during the 50s and 60s and over 65 eyewitness accounts from those closest to the Beatles, Larry Kane brings to life the evolution of the group that changed music forever.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The most positive thing that I can say about this book is that it contains quite a bit of original research; Larry Kane clearly conducted new interviews with many players in the Beatles' early days, both in Liverpool and Hamburg. As someone who has read MANY books about the band, I appreciated hearing new stories and perspectives. Unfortunately, the book is riddled with inaccuracies that are very obvious to the well-versed reader. For example, when Kane describes Yoko Ono's first visit to John's Aunt Mimi, he quotes her as saying something along the lines of "John's Uncle George was just sitting in the corner, like he was afraid to speak." It's not surprising that Uncle George didn't say much, given the fact that he had died more than a decade before this

meeting could possibly have taken place. Since this is a book that only covers the band's early days, I felt that the treatment of their childhoods was generally quite superficial, and this is borne out by the fact that Kane fails to mention Uncle George's death at all (possibly not being aware of it himself?). The obvious misquoting of Yoko also makes me wonder who else he is misquoting throughout the book. Another significant error was his assertion that Paul wanted Stu Sutcliffe out of the band in part because he wanted to be the bass player. Everything I have ever heard suggested that no one had wanted to be the bass player, which was the reason that John, Paul and George were all playing guitar before Stu became part of the band. If Paul had wanted to be the bassist, why wasn't he already the bassist? Kane offers no support for his assertion whatsoever, which leads me to believe that he simply assumed it was true because Paul became the bassist after Stu left.

Author Larry Kane first met the Beatles as a 21 year old reporter in 1964 when he accompanied them on their first US tour - he was also on the 1965 and part of the ill fated 1966 tour of the States and has written *A Ticket to Ride: Inside the Beatles' 1964 Tour That Changed the World* about his experiences, as well as other books on the band. It is a brave man who releases a new biography about the band's early years, claiming to be "the true story", especially with Mark Lewisohn's epic work about to have its first volume released in a few weeks. This claims to be the story of how the Beatles became the Beatles, from their childhood up until the end of 1963. In a way, it reminded me of the fanciful account by Allan Williams, "The Man Who Gave the Beatles Away"; entertaining, but more fiction than fact. Some books, for example, "The Day John Met Paul" by Jim O'Donnell have used a fictional feel to good effect - recreating an era, but getting the facts right. This book is a muddled account, which reuses often used myths and stories from those who have their own personal agenda in play. To be honest I became worried from almost the first chapter - when we are once again treated to the story of Mimi dodging the bombs to visit newborn John in hospital. There was no air raid on the night John was born, which is historical fact. Other reviewers have already mentioned Yoko's story of Uncle George meeting her, when he had died while John was still of school age. Also worrying is the assertion that Mimi had an affair with a boarder. She may, or may not, have had a love affair with a boarder, but it was not an, as implied, marital affair.

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