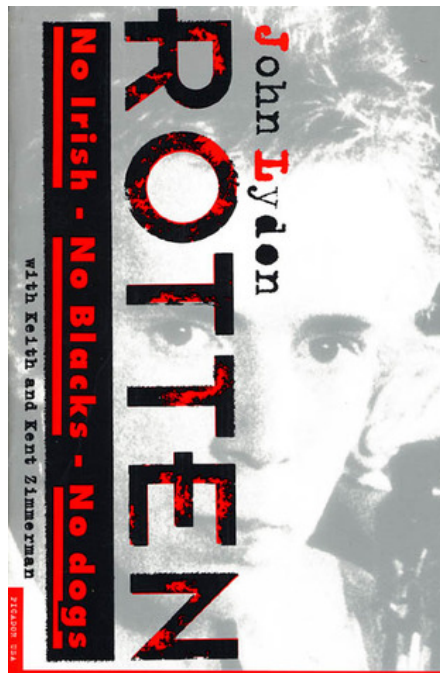




## Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs

*John Lydon , Keith Zimmerman , Kent Zimmerman*

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"I have no time for lies and fantasy, and neither should you. Enjoy or die..." --*John Lydon*

Punk has been romanticized and embalmed in various media. An English class revolt that became a worldwide fashion statement, punk's idols were the Sex Pistols, and its sneering hero was Johnny Rotten.

Seventeen years later, John Lydon looks back at himself, the Sex Pistols, and the "no future" disaffection of the time. Much more than just a music book, *Rotten* is an oral history of punk: angry, witty, honest, poignant, crackling with energy. Malcolm McLaren, Sid Vicious, Chrissie Hynde, Billy Idol, London and England in the late 1970s, the Pistols' creation and collapse...all are here, in perhaps the best book ever written about music and youth culture, by one of its most notorious figures.

## Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs Details

Date : Published February 15th 1995 by Picador (first published March 1994)

ISBN : 9780312118839

Author : John Lydon , Keith Zimmerman , Kent Zimmerman

Format : Paperback 352 pages

Genre : Biography, Nonfiction, Autobiography, Memoir, Music, Punk

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## From Reader Review Rotten: No Irish, No Blacks, No Dogs for online ebook

### Everett Darling says

Who knew Lydon was such a good writer?

-Anyone who's listened to his songs.

I have a few questions; how can the difference between holding individuality as the highest goal fit with the seemingly contradictory purpose of making music and fashion that is understandable to everyone, spanning through the range of economic and social classes?

And all the music that does that, these days anyway, is Pop or Top 20 Hip-Hop, boasting individual stars as benign as flowers, and challenging the status-quo about as much. And the individuality that is presented is marketed, bought and sold, and replicated for society by top-dog execs. with profits on the mind, not social change or personal rebellions. And this is the music that spans economic and social classes.

I don't like that.

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### J.P. says

Enjoyable yes, noteworthy no. I wasn't expecting previously untold revelations or learning lots I didn't already know but besides detailing his childhood and what everyone was wearing there's not a whole lot of information here. I did discover that a chain was Sid's weapon of choice. We all know the Sex Pistols didn't get along. It takes all of about 5 pages before John throws Glen Matlock under the tour bus for his opinion on what the group should be like. Had this book spent as much time on the group's antics it would have been more entertaining. The only stories that stuck with me were when Sid sees a Hasidic Jew dressed in traditional garb and he thinks it would look great on him so he goes to the store where the guy bought the outfit. The owner wisely refuses to sell him the clothes. The other was when John gets arrested and gives his name as Dave Vanian, the lead singer of the Damned. Better to have included stories like the day the Sex Pistols were signed to A&M which for me was the quintessential day in the life of the group. On the way over an argument ensues over who's got the best punk attitude. In the process Sid gets his shoes thrown out the window. On the way in he cuts his foot. Once inside, anarchy ensues. Sid none too pleasantly hollers for a bandage. John decides the décor can be improved by spray painting the walls. Paul plays frisbee with the company's record collection and Steve walks into the wrong loo and starts to have a go with the woman inside. To top it off the gang finds and makes short work of the booze meant for those covering the event. A&M figures it's best to cut their losses and drops them a few weeks later. Incidentally, the title refers to a sign John saw in a flat that was renting rooms.

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### Rick Brindle says

A very entertaining biography from one of the men who made punk happen. John Lydon writes exactly like he speaks, and you get the feeling he's sitting in your living room, talking to you when he tells his story. You

might not like some of it, you might not agree with some of it, but this is John Lydon, warts and all, telling his story as it happened. Authentic, funny, honest.

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### **Emmett Mulligan says**

One of the best music autobiographies I've read so far. Very eye opening. Whatever you think of the man himself or the legends that surround him, he comes across as humble (despite the bragging) intelligent & every bit as chaotic as you might imagine. Whip smart & with a fantastic sense of humour & the absurd. It's even worth reading just to get to the final line. One of the best ways to end on a high note (of sorts) ever!

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### **Amanda says**

I bought this about 6 years ago when I was a young impressionable 15 year old. I read it like the bible. I was never really into the punk scene, but it FASCINATED me. I began to show up my punker friends with my Sex Pistol knowledge. And it really helped me figure out a lot of things. I began to carry this book wherever I went. It had notes upon notes in it, underlines, circles, everything! I studied this book more than any of my textbooks. Unfortunately I gave it to a friend to read and her mother found it at a very inopportune time and discarded it. The thing is I am Mormon, raised Mormon, and love being Mormon. So was my friend, but she was fighting it. She didn't believe and that's totally fine with me, but her parents had issues and felt that it was inappropriate. See the thing with reading a book like this when you're 15 is your maturity level. I saw the terrible things that happened in that book as a result of drugs and thought "Oh okay, bad, don't do that". Others saw it as "OOOOH! Let's try that! Sid Vicious did it!". So I think I am going to rebuy this book because it's really important to me to own this book. I love music, I love people and it hit me at a really influential time in my life.

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### **Gen says**

This book is utterly fantastic.

I read this when I was 15 and was obsessed, not with the Sex Pistols but John Lydon as a person, his views and how he lives his life.

With the help of many of his musician friends (NAMELY Chrissy Hynde who was everywhere from 1970-1990), he tells his life story from growing up in Finsbury Park to PIL, up to it's publishing in 1994.

I think the main point to make is that this is not another "totez punk" autobiography, John Lydon is far more intelligent and anarchic than anyone will ever give him credit for.

This is a truly insightful read.

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### **Andy says**

This is as honest as you'll get from John Lydon, no conning, no overdone punk rock grandstanding. Lydon

talks about his spinal meningitis, his friends aka gang "The Johns" (incl. John "Sid Vicious" Richie) and Siouxsie Sioux's delight in owning home appliances. Funny and sad and honest all the way.

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## Holly says

First off, I have to admit that Lydon is right at the top of the list of people who have influenced me and who I hold in the highest regard.

This book is entertaining, intelligent, and honest. Lydon is a guy who can laugh at himself. He is also a good storyteller; he has the classic Celtic style courtesy of his Irish roots.

So many artists from this era are dead and gone, if only one could survive to be the official voice of the first punk wave, I am glad it is John Lydon.

Funny how a very small thing can influence a person many years later.....I am pushing 50 and still refuse to vacation in the Caribbean because of "Holidays in the Sun".....I don't want to holiday in other people's misery. (the fact that I am not a fan of sun, sand and surf might also have something to do with it)

I would be interested in reading anything else he might publish, and hope he writes another book sometime soon.

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## Erika says

**“Any kind of history you read is basically the winning side telling you the others were bad.”**

If that doesn't perfectly describe this book, I don't know what does.

I am of two frames of mind thinking about this book. One is that I found John Lydon's stance on the entire punk scene to be outstanding, and one that I agree with also, so I'm biased. When the punk scene started it was something completely different than what it evolved into and a lot of punks now don't seem to realize that. The fact that it is a scene now is the greatest indicator of that. Punk's origin wasn't about looking and thinking the same to fit in with a group. I respect Lydon for recognizing that and harping on it so much throughout the book.

What wasn't interesting was how repetitive and bitter he still was about the Pistols. I won't fault Lydon for his bitterness, I'd be bitter as hell too, but 200 pages of incessant whining about it is more than my patience can take. The book starts to lose its emphasis on the contribution of the Pistols and turns into a giant manifesto on why Malcolm McLaren is the worst person on the planet. But hey, he doesn't harbor any feelings of hatred toward him. Ha. I guess you should expect no less from Johnny Rotten though.

Despite the overabundance of bitterness, I still enjoyed this read. It's written like John Lydon talks: brash, nihilistic, narcissistic and incredibly entertaining. It talks about the British punk scene like no other artist would be able to do in the same way. I may not agree with a lot of Lydon's "truths", but you can't deny that he was a major player in the punk world. This book is worth a read just for that aspect alone.

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## ♥ Marlene♥ says

on Friday, November 28, 2008 I wrote about this book:

Well I am very disappointed with it. The main problem was Johnny Rotten himself. He is constantly bragging about himself and thinks he is God or something. Nobody else does any good except for him. All the band members were bad, all the other bands sucked. (yawn) Plus he is also constantly contradicting himself. lol. Can't take this serious.

Another annoying thing, the story repeats itself also every time because everybody gets a say. And even though I lived the same kind of life as he and his friends did, I thought it was boring.

End conclusion. What a boring book. I've lived this life, lived in a squad with other punks , visited the gigs of all the bands he is talking about, but Rotten is too annoying, every band sucks according to him. Plus it was very repetitious.

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## minnie says

Read this many years ago, I remember it as being a true account of the punk scene, 1977 and all that, as opposed to the glossed up media view of Punk.

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## Ian "Marvin" Graye says

### Any Old Way You Like It

There are three musicians (with respect to whom).. sorry, I'll start again..

John Lennon, John Lydon, Noel Gallagher... I would listen to everything they ever said and read everything they ever wrote, if only I could get my hands on it.

### My, What a Big Sex Pistol You Have

People were scared of the Sex Pistols and terrified of what they might do to the music industry.

This is Rotten to the core.

### More, Please

We need something like this to put the wind up us again.

We need more people this savvy in the music industry.

No we don't, we need more people like this making and distributing their own music.

October 24, 2011

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### **christopher says**

If you looked up the word wanker in the dictionary, there would be a picture of John Lydon there. This book was saved from one star by being kind of funny from time to time and having tidbits of information about 70s London punk I didn't know before. Sure, I mean, he's been involved with 4 or 5 classic records, but reading the rantings of an egomaniac is never a good time.

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### **Bosco Farr says**

Near the end of the book Lydon writes the following line, "We're The Flowers In Your Dust Bin." If there is a better summation of the art of the Sex Pistols. I am unaware of it. I love this book. I love his revisionism. I love his unapologetic contempt. I love the style of his writing though I could do without some of the unnecessary repetition but I can live with it. Pair this up with England's Dreaming and I think you can know all the most important stuff about the original wave of UK Punk Rock. The Pistols caused a tidal wave in pop culture and rock music. There was a tremendous price to be paid by all the participants. You'll get a good look at what that was and how much it cost all of them. Wonderful wonderful book. Full of antagonism, contempt, joy and thoughtfulness. If you have any interest in punk rock at all this is on your must read list.

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### **Marija \*Don't Even Try To Save Me Tonight\* says**

What a great insight on the music industry of 70's. I recently got into Sex Pistols and when I saw this book on the book fair I just had to have it. It was a really fun and genuine book to read.

Never realised that John Lydon could be such a good writer. I mean, he writes amazing songs but I never thought he could actually write a book. Very judgmental of me, but yeah... I guess I am judgmental after all....

The only thing I didn't like is that in basically 200 or so pages different people talk about the same thing. It's really great knowing how different people from different sides viewed certain events, but really, those parts were kinda the same, only having slight differences from person to person. My favorite part of the book was the part after the Sex Pistols. Reading about Sid's death, about the break up, his relationship with Malcolm after all this time and how John formed Public Image Ltd. It's sad how a lot of people in that world is very hypocritical and basically don't care about the music and artists, just money.

I love this book and am grateful for having the opportunity to read it. Things they did for music culture was very influential, though you can't find a band like them these days. There won't be anything like them ever again.

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