



Sexplosion: From Andy Warhol to A Clockwork Orange-- How a Generation of Pop Rebels Broke All the Taboos

By Robert Hofler

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After the sexual revolution came the sexual explosion

The six years between 1968 and 1973 saw more sexual taboos challenged than ever before. Film, literature, and theater simultaneously broke through barriers previously unimagined, giving birth to what we still consider to be the height of sexual expression in our pop culture: *Portnoy's Complaint*, *Myra Breckinridge*, *Hair*, *The Boys in the Band*, *Midnight Cowboy*, *Last Tango in Paris*, and *Deep Throat*.

In *Sexplosion*, Robert Hofler weaves a lively narrative linking many of the writers, producers, and actors responsible for creating these and other controversial works, placing them within their cultural and social frameworks. During the time the Stonewall Riots were shaking Greenwich Village and *Roe v. Wade* was making its way to the Supreme Court, a group of daring artists was challenging the status quo and defining the country's concept of sexual liberation. Hofler follows the creation of and reaction to these groundbreaking works, tracing their connections and influences upon one another and the rest of entertainment.

Always colorful and often unexpected, *Sexplosion* is an illuminating account of a generation of sexual provocateurs and the power their works continue to hold decades later.

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Editorial Review

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Starred Review The author, senior editor at *Variety* and former entertainment editor at *Penthouse*, sets out to show how a number of very talented, risk-taking rebels challenged the world's prevailing attitudes toward sex and, in the process, changed pop culture forever. Thus, we have a compendium of period sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, much of it familiar, but which, in aggregate, demonstrates Hofler's thesis abundantly. Focusing on the brief period of 1968–73, the text presents a deluge of barrier-breaking books, films, and theater that is dizzying in its magnitude and impact. Hofler's appropriately breezy style allows his journalistic strengths to shine; it all rings true. Arranged chronologically, beginning with *Hair* and the movies of Andy Warhol and quickly taking in Philip Roth's *Portnoy's Complaint*, John Schlesinger's film *Midnight Cowboy*, Kenneth Tynan's *Oh! Calcutta!* (the title explained), Mart Crowley's gay-themed *The Boys in the Band*, and much more, with convincingly detailed context, Hofler describes in often strong language and with considerable wit what was unmistakably a new cultural reality and moral perspective in America and Britain. Although his epilogue seems superfluous, he otherwise makes his case compellingly. This is readable and enjoyable popular history for younger adult readers and deeply resonant nostalgia for the boomers who came of age during this heady half decade. --Mark Levine

Review

Dizzying in its magnitude and impact . . . Hofler describes in often strong language and with considerable wit what was unmistakably a new cultural reality and moral perspective in America and Britain . . . (Booklist (starred review))

Lively [and] unapologetically profane . . . Hofler covers pop-culture figures and their creations with an expert's depth of knowledge . . . resulting in a delightful journey through a short-lived but influential period (Publishers Weekly (starred review))

Fun, fascinating examination of the moment when American and British culture seemed to lose all inhibitions . . . Readers will marvel over the ideological distance traveled since those years . . . Sparkling history of an artistically spirited age. (Kirkus Reviews)

So vivid it's like reliving the times, Robert Hofler's *Sexplosion* seamlessly illuminates in fast-paced detail the tumultuous era in which American culture finally lost its virginity. His impressive research and authoritative voice make for a !*&%#@! good read. (Stephen M. Silverman, author *Dancing on the Ceiling: Stanley Donen and His Movies*)

Sexplosion is a multifaceted gem—a close examination of the intersection of sex, politics, and the arts that is also a thrilling cultural history. It is an original and provocative look at the backstage scenes of America's theaters, studios, and clubs, where artists were demolishing inhibitions and transforming our lives. (Bob Spitz, author of *Dearie: The Remarkable Life of Julia Child*)

"Rich, funny, and comprehensive, *Sexplosion* takes you inside the tumultuous, energizing years of 1968 to 1973, when artists, filmmakers, and writers defied authority and challenged every taboo to create a sexual revolution that reverberates to this day. This is a superb evocation of an era." (Patricia Bosworth, author of *Jane Fonda: The Private Life of a Public Woman*)

Sexplosion is a witty, insightful ride through the most entertaining period in American pop culture, the late 1960's, when saying bad words and shedding one's clothes in public were controversial and, in some circles, heroic acts. (—Ron Nyswaner, screenwriter of Philadelphia and The Painted Veil)

A thoroughly enjoyable romp through a five year explosion of taboo busting, sexually adventurous entertainment. Robert Hofler pays tribute to the trailblazing artists who paved the way for the freedom on screen that we take for granted today. (Jeffrey Schwarz, director of I AM DIVINE and VITO)

Fascinating. (L.A. Weekly)

A bona fide page-turner . . . Fascinating, funny, and thorough . . . Sexplosion tells the story of the people who made our current enlightenment possible. (LitReactor)

Eye-opening . . . a 327-page time machine trip back to a pivotal moment in modern pop history. (Connecticut Post)

That most rare of histories: as fun as it is fascinating. (Bookgasm)

“...a provocative romp through the culture wars and the transformation in America’s sexual politics...” (Wall Street Journal)

Written by a true pop culture connoisseur....like a long, three-martini lunch with a chatty acquaintance who knows the studio-lot scuttlebutt and isn’t afraid to share it. (Washington Post)

A compelling historical look at the avant-garde art scene of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the set that broke taboos about what art could and couldn’t say about sex. Hofler doesn’t hold back....And lurid details make for a compelling read. (GQ)

Like Easy Riders, Raging Bulls, Peter Biskind’s study of the New Hollywood, Sexplosion deftly weaves a path through the friendships and collaborations which created common ground.... Above all, he amasses one unforgettable vignette after another. (The Independent)

Richly detailed, entertaining study of film and theatre’s sex boom in the late 1960s and early 1970s. (Sunday Times (London))

Compulsively readable ...Sexplosion, with energetic glee, details how between 1968 and 1973 rebellious artists ...proceeded to annihilate the mostly hypocritical censorship standards. (Boston Herald)

Sexplosion stands as an engrossing chronicle of artistic expansion.... If your guilty-pleasure tastes run toward showbiz gossip, note that this book is pretty delicious. (Financial Review (Australia))

Hofler captures the arc of a generation that got drunk on pop liberation and woke up a little hung over....a parade of scandals. (New York Times Book Review)

Robert Hofler knows this topic better than anyone. Sexplosion is a well received study of the fiery, liberating culture that seized audiences from 1968 to ‘73....So take off your 3D glasses and let’s dance into the time tunnel of social tumult and other earthly delights. (Micahel Musto, Out)

About the Author

Robert Hofler has spent more than forty years as an entertainment journalist, having worked as entertainment editor of *Life* and executive editor of *Us* magazine, and most recently at *Variety*, where he was a theater reporter and senior editor for fifteen years. His nonfiction works include the Henry Willson biography, *The Man Who Invented Rock Hudson*, *Variety's "The Movie That Changed My Life,"* and *Party Animals*, a biography of Allan Carr. Hofler is the theater critic for *The Wrap* and lives in New York City.

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