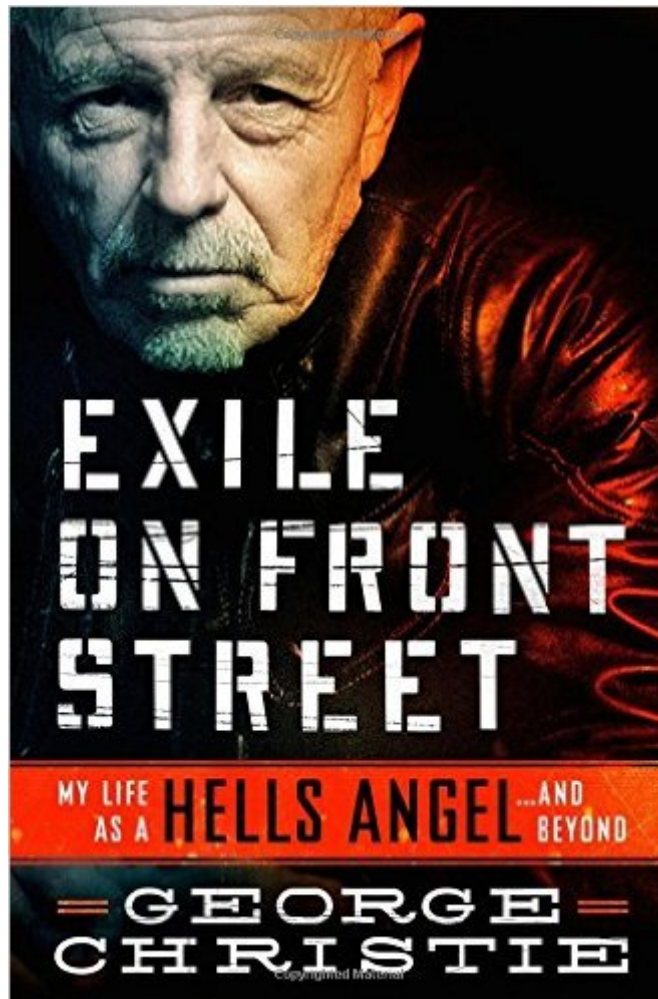


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Exile On Front Street: My Life As A Hells Angel . . . And Beyond



Synopsis

After forty years in the Hells Angels, George Christie was ready to retire. As president of the high-profile Ventura charter of the club, he had been the yin to Sonny Barger's yang. Barger was the reckless figurehead and de facto world leader of the Hells Angels. Christie was the negotiator, the spokesman, the thinker, the guy who smoothed things out. He was the one who carried the Olympic torch and counted movie stars, artists, rock musicians, and police chief captains among his friends. But leaving the Hells Angels isn't easy, and within two weeks of retirement, he was told he was out-banned--blackballed by his fellow Angels, prohibited from wearing the club patch, and even told he should remove his Death Head tattoo. Now Christie sets out to tell his story. *Exile on Front Street* is the tale of how a former Marine gave up a comfortable job with the Department of Defense and swore allegiance to the Hells Angels. In this revealing, hard-hitting memoir, he recounts his life as an outlaw biker with the world's most infamous motorcycle club.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I first learned of George Christie after watching the History Channel's "Outlaw Chronicles" last year. The six part series focused on Christie's experience as a Hell's Angel before he and the club parted ways. The series was fascinating in that it offered a peek inside the world's largest and most-recognized outlaw motorcycle club from a long-term, high ranking former member. The series revealed Christie to be intelligent, diplomatic and a great story-teller. While *EXILE ON FRONT STREET* covers much of the same ground shown in the mini-series, it fills gaps and elaborates on stories to provide a better understanding of outlaw biker world. *EXILE ON FRONT*

STREET is mostly biographical, but the underlying theme of the book is George Christie's effort to set the record straight on his current standing with the Hells Angels by tracing his steps with the club from the beginning. According to him, he left the club on good terms, but the club later claimed he was kicked out with current members ordered to end all contact with him (bad). Christie presents his argument that the change in circumstance was caused by an escalating adversarial relationship with Hells Angel icon Sonny Barger, a relationship that still presents problems for Christie today. From beginning to end, the book is chock full of stories viewed through the unique perspective of a former high ranking member - in other words, a rare perspective. Christie knows how to tell a story and while I recognized many incidents covered in "Outlaw Chronicles", I felt the book offered a more elaborate perspective.

George Christie was a member of Hell's Angels for about 40 years, and was a prominent spokesman for the group. In this book, he talks about the importance of living the "outlaw" life, and how he has to be who he is. Christie left Hell's Angels when he was in his 60s, but his chapter (club) says they threw him out. Obviously, this is a bitter point for him, as both the introduction and final chapters dwell on that point. In fact, the book is in many ways a man justifying his stance in the various political maneuverings of a very strangely political environment. Christie seems like a pretty bright and shrewd guy, and the book's writing is good. However, the book itself is dull. No doubt for legal reasons, Christie never seems to be involved directly in any of drug deals, beatings, or murders that occur around him. He portrays himself as the peacemaker between different chapters of the Angels, and with other biker groups, but it's pretty clear from a couple of stories that he relished intimidating people. Parties happen, but other than the political fallout from a fight at the parties, we don't hear much about party itself. If you're looking for a feel for the "sex, drugs and rock n roll" aspect of being a Hell's Angel, you won't get much of that here. Another weakness is the lack of continuity - with the exception of a couple of key Hell's Angels and his family, people drift into and out of his life, so it can be hard to sustain a story. That is how real life works, of course, but it made it hard to stay interested. The characterization of people is fairly black and white - his first wife is difficult, his second wife is an wonderful person.

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