

I Lost it at the Video Store: A Filmmakers' Oral History of a Vanished Era

Tom Roston

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Tom Roston : I Lost it at the Video Store: A Filmmakers' Oral History of a Vanished Era before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I Lost it at the Video Store: A Filmmakers' Oral History of a Vanished Era:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Review of the Kindle version By kevin01 This book is a light read and it can be finished in half a day by a slow reader, but it is a worthwhile read for those who can relate to the 80s and 90s home video phenomenon. It begins with a terrific introduction by Tom Rostin who gives an overview of the history and significance of home video, especially VHS tapes. It ends with a reprint of a NY Times article on the closing of Kim's Video store in Manhattan. The bulk of the book are transcripts (with editing) of several conversations with filmmakers and film executives who recount how the home video business in the 80s and 90s changed their lives. The topics discussed range from anecdotal experiences of being a video store clerk (Kevin Smith confesses to using the porn section to "pleasure himself"), how the video business helped the indie film movement, how the advent of Netflix and streaming killed off the video rental business, to almost existential opinionations of what video stores (and their demise) meant to the public. Participants include Kevin Smith, Quentin Tarantino, David O. Russell, Larry Estes, Allison Anders, Janet Pierson, Luc Besson, Darren Aronofsky, and several others. A few black-and-white photos of the participants are also included in the book. With that many people, we get a wide variety of viewpoints, but unfortunately not too many exchanges nor back-and-forths. Due to the transcript format, opinions are given out in bits and pieces. Kevin Smith is the only one who is given a whole chapter where only he gives his opinions. I wish every participant would have the floor the same way he did. As in every conversation, some speakers always dominate more than others, and the same is true here. I barely got any output from Luc Besson (who speaks maybe 2-3 times in the whole book), whereas Kevin Smith opines on nearly everything, and he has his own chapter. Some of the participants are fairly passionate about their views. When Tarantino talks about how Netflix makes it unnecessary to go to a video store, he says incredulously, "And that's progress? Progress is not leaving your home? I like eating at home too, but once in a while I like going to a restaurant too." Such passion makes me want to see how the actual interview went down. I surely wish the interviewer recorded the whole thing on video and/or audio. Playing it back would be like watching "My Dinner with Andre". Great conversations need to be read AND watched.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Made me very nostalgic By Sebastian Zavala This book's been receiving some harsh reviews, stating it's not as deep as it could've been. Well, yeah, it kinda only touches the surface of the subject, and yeah, the interviews are not very well balanced. We get a lot of Kevin Smith, for example, and quite a bit of Quentin Tarantino, but people like James Franco or Luc Besson only appear sporadically. Nevertheless, I really liked this book. Being a "90s kid", I'm really nostalgic about the whole video store sub-culture, even though here in Peru we only had Blockbuster and a couple other options (West Coast Video and Drugstore Home Video). I liked the way all these filmmakers and producers and executives had different opinions regarding the life and death of these stores--from Tarantino, who simply doesn't understand WHY people stopped going to video stores, to Darren Aronofsky, who gets that people are watching more and more films online, and had to actually do an iPhone-compatible sound mix for his movie Noah. All in all, it's a very entertaining, somewhat light, but very interesting book. And if you have a very particular nostalgic feeling for these physical formats, for the ritual of going to the store and actually collecting movies in a physical form, you're gonna love it.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A short but fun nostalgia ride into video stores By Anthony I knew I was going to enjoy this book going in. The subject matter of a nostalgia ride with some of my favourite directors as the guide for video stores through the 80s, 90s early 2000s just stood out to me. My main nostalgia for video stores was in the late 90s with VHS most of the 2000s with DVDs until the Internet took over as my delivery mechanism. Two of the three video stores I used to frequent are long shut down. The last one puzzles me as to how it can be still in business. Anyway this book is short but sweet. Full of stories from great directors of the video store era, some of whom worked in video stores detailing their experiences with video stores. It also deals with the fall of video stores and rise of the Internet the streaming piracy that ended up ending the ride for the everyday video store. The battle between Mum Pop video stores vs. corporates like Blockbuster is explored as well. Quentin Tarantino Kevin Smith are strong features of the book. With some details of how they transitioned from video store clerks to making movies. Overall I'd recommend this to people who grew up with video stores as well as those interested in the history of film. It would also be interesting for those who didn't frequent video stores to get an idea what the craze was all about. Thanks to SlashFilm for the recommend.

For a generation, video stores were to filmmakers what bookstores were to writers. They were the salons where many of today's best directors first learned their craft. The art of discovery that video stores encouraged through the careful curation of clerks was the fertile, if sometimes fetid, soil from which today's film world sprung. Video stores were also the financial engine without which the indie film movement wouldn't have existed. In *I Lost it at the Video Store*, Tom Roston interviews the filmmakers--including John Sayles, Quentin Tarantino, Kevin Smith, Darren Aronofsky, David O. Russell and Allison Anders--who came of age during the reign of video rentals, and constructs a living, personal narrative of an era of cinema history which, though now gone, continues to shape film culture today.

"This is a book that was waiting to happen, and fortunately it was Tom Roston who wrote it. After we lost it at the movies, a later era of cinephiles lost it at the video store, and this is their story in their words--nostalgic, vivid, and important, because video germinated a new generation of great filmmakers." --Peter Biskind, author of *Down and*

Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film "Informative, hilarious, a little sad, but mostly just exuberant: This chronicle of a lost era details not just how the video-rental revolution shaped a generation of filmmakers, but how it changed the ways we watch and talk about film. It may even make you nostalgic for rewinding." --Stephanie Zacharek, Chief Film Critic, The Village Voice "A Proustian madeleine of a book, I Lost It at the Video Store celebrates the images and textures of a nearly-gone era, as well as examining its importance to a generation of artists." --Matt Zoller Seitz, editor-in-chief, RogerEbert.com "What a terrific read. It's a blast to revisit those (delightful, maddening) hours I spent trying to pick a movie, from the perspective of Tarantino, Sayles, and the rest of the all-star cast Tom Roston has assembled. These smart, funny, and sometimes-clashing voices from the other side of the VHS box reveal how video-store culture worked, how it influenced filmmaking, and what's lost and gained in the streaming world that's replacing it. The result is an entertaining story that goes way beyond nostalgia: It will make you appreciate why the video-shop era mattered, whether you lived through it or not." --Rob Walker, author of Buying In: What We Buy and Who We Are "[Video] stores themselves have faded into history, but their now-famous onetime inhabitants--Quentin Tarantino, Kevin Smith, Doug Liman and Darren Aronofsky, among others--remember them well. Their stories, assembled here, provide a memorable chronicle of a golden age of pure movie love." -- Kurt Loder, film critic and former MTV host -- s"Using interviews with a wide array of filmmakers, former Premiere editor Roston brings the magic of video stores to life." --Kirkus sAbout the AuthorTom Roston is a journalist whose work appears in The New York Times, The Guardian, Spin, The Los Angeles Times and The Hollywood Reporter, among other publications. A former senior editor at Premiere magazine, he also writes a weekly blog about documentaries for PBS' award-winning POV website. He lives in Brooklyn.