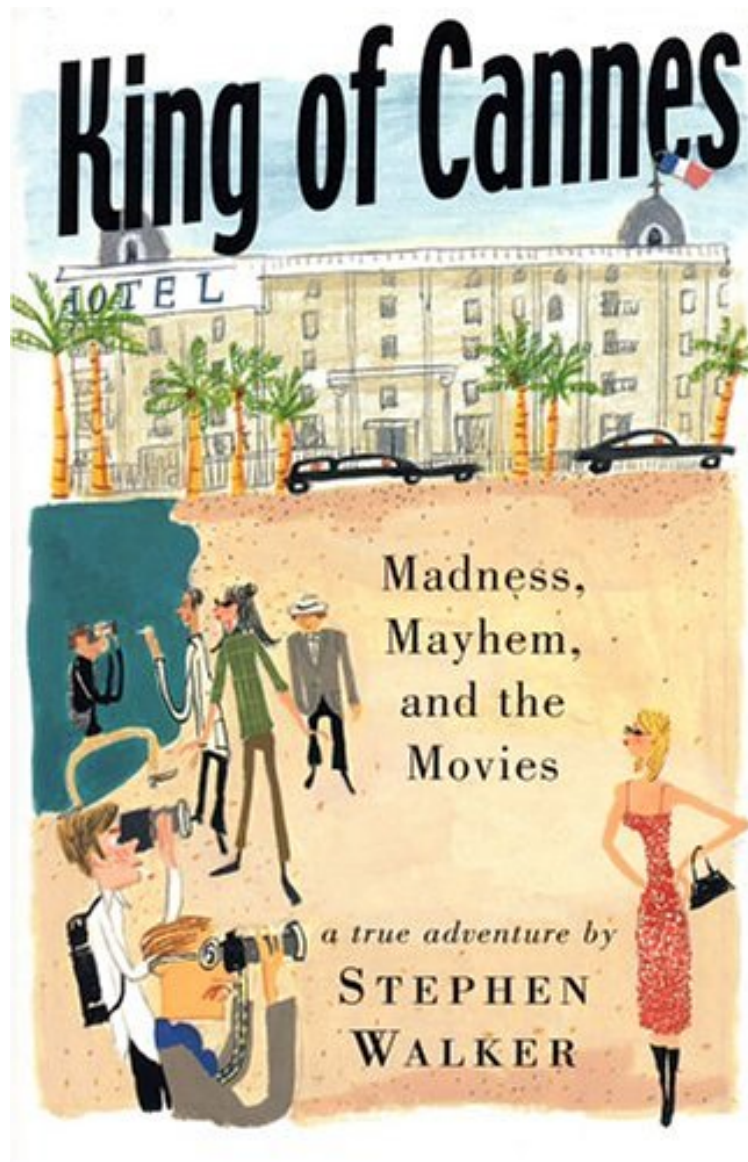


# King of Cannes: Madness, Mayhem and the Movies

Stephen Walker

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**Stephen Walker : King of Cannes: Madness, Mayhem and the Movies** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised King of Cannes: Madness, Mayhem and the Movies:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. 'Frankly' dishonestBy Trevor WillsmerWhile often amusing, documentary maker Stephen Walker's account of his attempted manipulation of a handful of filmmakers at the Cannes Film Festival is ultimately a fundamentally dishonest book. Despite making a memorable if over-directed 'Everyman'

documentary on veterans of the Somme, the author proved hopelessly out of his depth when faced with an industry that failed to conform to his often facile preconceptions. Walker set out to mock a group of hopefuls trying to launch their careers for comic effect, only to be occasionally frustrated in his attempts to manoeuvre them into stereotypical situations by (most of) the filmmakers' inherent professionalism and dignity. Absurdly uninformed on his subject and held in growing contempt by his own production team, he cut one duo of filmmakers out of the programme because, to his dismay, they had a successful series of meetings, only to be blown out himself by another who turned out to be a major award winner who saw through him in moments. While often telling stories against himself and stressing his own inadequacies as a documentarian (he makes no bones about not knowing the first thing about his subject), it's often to cover up worse transgressions. In the resulting TV documentary, 'Waiting for Harvey,' one of his 'victims' produced a video tape shot before their meeting detailing exactly how Walker was going to try to get easy laughs out of his attempts to sell his feature, hitting the nail on the head with astonishing accuracy, but whereas Walker admits to all kinds of minor offences, you'll find no mention of his unmasking here - maybe his ego couldn't handle it. It's an easy, gossipy read, but don't mistake it for the truth.

1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Warning: this book is not canned!

By Sonechka A lot of supposedly funny books are tiresome because their authors are trying so hard to be funny, but this book is not one of them. Stephen Walker has written a really funny book because he knows how to put what's funny in front of you and then get out of the way. He has a great sense of timing and an ear for the spoken word but his book isn't just about all the wild stuff that happens during the making of his documentary. Walker is willing to show you himself making a fool of himself, the traditional soul of comedy, but he does more than play the clown. You see the drive of the documentary filmmaker in his need to understand what's going on inside the heads of the filmmakers he's filming. His connection to his filmmaker-subjects is a tilt-a-whirl checkerboard of empathy and distance. The troubles he runs into are funny, awful, pathetic, outrageous, goofy, tragic, stupid, dumb, hilarious. I like Walker because he doesn't force anything. The things he finally doesn't understand are allowed to remain as rough and puzzling as they really are. It's definitely a funny book, a really funny book--because the tears are as real as the laughs. So what I'm saying already is buy the book, Walker should laugh all the way to the bank.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. King of Cannes

By A Customer This is a great book. It accomplishes what it sets out to do: to give the reader a look at the "behind the scenes" happenings of the biggest film festival in the world! The narrative voice is very strong and the dry british wit makes it quite a page-turner! You do laugh out loud...and you just want to keep reading and reading. Another thing that also made this book very interesting, was the fact that it didn't merely focus on the "star-gazing" aspect of the industry, rather it mentions some important personalities in indie cinema and allows the readers to see the difficulties that independent filmmakers face -- all this is juxtaposed to the glamorous stars and personalities of Hollywood who attend Cannes and are actually welcomed there (as opposed to our narrator here!) A great read!

Stephen Walker is a neurotic British filmmaker with a mixed track record. His last documentary was a flop. Everyone hated it, and for a while Walker had fantasies of murdering the lot of them. But then he was inspired. He'd make a documentary that would offer a peek inside the crazy world of filmmaking. He'd direct a movie about four ambitious unknown filmmakers in their quest for fame and glory at the film festival of film festivals--Cannes. King of Cannes is Walker's hilarious, uncensored diary of making that documentary--from finding fledgling directors who will agree to be filmed, to following their madcap adventures at the Cannes Film Festival. Walker's main cast of Cannes-hopefuls includes James Meredino, an American director who comes to Cannes with all the fanfare of a Hollywood prodigy; Mike Hakata, a young Rastafarian filmmaker from London who hijacks a telephone booth in Cannes and turns it into his office; Erick Zonca, a first-time French director who actually has a film in the official competition; and finally, Stephen Loyd, a taxi driver from East London who, along with a couple of buddies, drives to Cannes in a van emblazoned with a giant marijuana leaf, with hopes of raising money to make his film. And then there's Walker himself, practically on the verge of a nervous breakdown trying to film them in their lunatic determination to make their mark.

From Publishers Weekly Long before the first agent tromped through the snow at Sundance, newly crowned directors were walking down the red carpet at Cannes. In his lively carnival of a book, documentary filmmaker Walker writes about the king of film festivals from the perspective of the people to whom it means the most: the filmmakers. Charged with making a documentary about Cannes for the BBC (titled *Waiting for Harvey*), Walker follows four filmmakers who take their projects to the festival in search of fame and fortune, and the person empowered to bestow them, Miramax capo Harvey Weinstein. Walker's cast includes the hip and tough-talking director James Merendino (SLC Punk), the serious and soft-spoken Frenchman Erick Zonca (*The Dream Life of Angels*) and a few lesser lights, like an East London cab driver who drives to the Riviera in a van decorated with a large cannabis leaf. Predictably, the film business turns out to be a gamble, and Cannes offers rewards and punishments to the filmmakers in equal measure. While Walker's characters are funny and well drawn, their viability as subjects for Walker's film is never far from his mind. The author's apparently scrupulous honesty in detailing the stretching-of-the-truth and out-and-out

deceptions necessary in documentary filmmaking is diverting, but inevitably distances us from the lives he depicts and rebounds against his own sincerity. Part diary, part film script, the book ultimately tells us more about Walker's own hopes and dreams than anyone else's. But perhaps that is the point: to the glamour of Cannes, no one is immune. (Apr.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal This is a rare animal--a book about the making of a documentary film. As documentaries are the neglected mutts of the movie industry, a shaggy dog story is to be expected. With lots of predictable pathos and wry humor, Walker relates the production of *Waiting for Harvey*, his BBC-funded project about four unknown directors who aspire to greatness at the Cannes Film Festival. His quartet of hopefuls includes an American B-movie prodigy, an independent Rastafarian dynamo, a taxi driver from East London, and--quelle chance!--Erick Zonca, the neophyte French director whose *La Vie Rev?e des Anges* actually wins prizes in the official competition. Of course, it wouldn't be Cannes without an accompanying cast that includes rapacious Hollywood executives, fatuous marketers, and sleazy Eurotrash. It's all rather droll in a nihilistic sort of way. Recommended for public libraries. -Neal Baker, Earlham Coll., Richmond, IN Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Every May an eclectic band of filmmakers descends on a small French coastal town with great expectations. For many of the filmmakers, the Cannes Film Festival is a make-or-break opportunity. And a few will make key Hollywood contacts so they can try later, and some (read most) will afterward disappear into oblivion. In his role as a documentary filmmaker with the BBC, Walker and his camera crew followed an eccentric group of filmmakers as they made their way to and through the Cannes experience. Ever hopeful, Mike Hakata carries his six cans of film around town. Eric Zonca actually has a picture entered in the competition, but Walker so riles him that he tries to get out of the film. James Merendino is a B-moviemaker with A-movie aspirations. But by far the oddest of the group is Stephen Lloyd, who with his buddies rides into town with a big marijuana leaf emblazoned on his yellow van. The van attracts attention, mostly and continuously from the French police. An amusing look at the Hollywood experience across the pond. Marlene Chamberlain