

Book review: “Unmasked: The Final Years of Michael Jackson”

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer



Have you ever been wrong about someone?

You thought you understood her integrity and morality but you were, unfortunately, quite wrong. You heard he was a jerk, a complete idiot, that he was sleazy but he turned out to be a pleasant, fun companion. And though your first impressions made you vow to listen to your Mama when she said not to judge a book by its cover, the next person you met got the same snap judgments.

Author Ian Halperin says his assumption of guilt in the Michael Jackson molestation trial made him want to know the truth. In the new book “Unmasked: The Final Years of Michael Jackson”, Halperin writes about what he learned.

Ian Halperin was mad. Like most people around the world, he’d formed an opinion of The King of Pop based on news and tabloids. Halperin was angry because, as the father of a young child, he figured Jackson would be found not guilty for a crime he believed Jackson had committed. Because he’s an investigative biographer, Halperin decided to uncover the truth.

Over the course of several years, Halperin learned plenty about Michael Jackson.

Interviewees who’d been at Neverland during sleepovers vowed that nothing “funny” had ever happened. Former child stars, adult friends of Jackson, impoverished children-now-grown-up all swore that Michael was just a big kid and acted like a goofy “10-year-old”. Although Jackson did himself no favors by admitting on-camera that having children in his bed was “sweet”, Halperin came to believe that most of Michael Jackson’s accusers went after him for money and that Jackson was not a pedophile.

Quite the contrary, in fact: Halperin seems certain that Michael Jackson was attracted to young adult men and was, therefore, gay.

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To that end, Halperin says that Michael Jackson’s marriages to Lisa Marie Presley and to Debbie Rowe were both meant to quiet rumors. Halperin believes that Scientology was behind the first “Royal Marriage”. As for Debbie Rowe, Halperin says “I fully expect that it will emerge that the children had a ‘test tube’ conception...”

And, despite what the autopsy claims, Halperin believes that drugs and illness contributed to Michael Jackson’s death, but greed, pure and simple, ultimately killed the singer.

“Unmasked: The Final Years of Michael Jackson” doesn’t really tell us much that we don’t already know, but hearing it afresh was good.

With his investigative journalist’s eye zeroed in, author Ian Halperin even went undercover in the Jackson camp to get what he believes is the truth. His reporting seems fair and balanced, but reads a bit like a juicy tabloid – not necessarily a bad thing – as he tells tales about Jackson, other stars, and Hollywood goings-on. Overall, while I thought the focus on the molestation part of Jackson’s life got to be a little much, I found this book to be a quick, enjoyable read.

Still can’t get enough of The King of Pop? Then pop this book in your bag. To pass up “Unmasked: The Final Years of Michael Jackson” would be so wrong.

“Unmasked: The Final Years of Michael Jackson” by Ian Halperin | c.2009, Simon Spotlight Entertainment / Transit Publishing | \$25.00 / \$24.95 Canada | 287 pages, plus a transcript and notes