



Big Bosoms and Square Jaws: The Biography of Russ Meyer, King of the Sex Film

Jimmy McDonough

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What do you need to make money making movies? The answer, according to cult hero, creator of the sexploitation film, and the man the *Wall Street Journal* once dubbed the King Leer of Hollywood, Russ Meyer, is: “big bosoms and square jaws.” In the first candid and fiendishly researched account of the late cinematic instigator’s life, Jimmy McDonough shows us how Russ Meyer used that formula to turn his own crazed fantasies into movies that made him a millionaire and changed the face of American film forever.

Bringing his anecdote—and action—packed biographical style to another renegade of popular culture, *New York Times* bestselling author of *Shakey* Jimmy McDonough offers a wild, warts-and-all portrait of Russ Meyer, the director, writer, producer, and commando moviemaking force behind such sexploitation classics as *Faster, Pussycat! Kill! Kill!*, *Vixen*, and *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*. This former WWII combat photographer immortalized his personal sexual obsession (women with enormous breasts, of course) upon the silver screen, turning his favorite hobby into box-office gold when this one-man movie machine wrote, directed, and produced a no-budget wonder called *The Immoral Mr. Teas* in 1959. The modest little film pushed all preexisting limits of on-screen nudity, and with its success, the floodgates of what was permitted to be shown on film were thrust open, never to be closed again. Russ Meyer ignited a true revolution in filmmaking, breaking all sex, nudity, and violence taboos. In a career that spanned more than forty years, Meyer created a body of work that has influenced a legion of filmmakers, fashionistas, comic book artists, rock bands, and even the occasional feminist.

Rich with wicked and sometimes shocking observations and recollections from Meyer’s friends (such as colleague Roger Ebert and fellow filmmaker John Waters), lovers and leading ladies (some of whom played both roles with equal vigor), a cadre of his grizzled combat buddies, moviemakers inspired by him, and critics and fans alike, *Big Bosoms and Square Jaws* tells the voluptuous story of Meyer’s very singular life and career: his troubled youth, his war years, his volatile marriages, his victories against censorship, and his clashes with the Hollywood establishment. In his new biography of a true maverick, Jimmy McDonough blows the lid off the story of Russ Meyer, from beginning to his recent tragic demise, creating in the process a vivid portrait of a past America.

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