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AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

Inside the Fire: My Strange Days with the Doors
B. Douglas Cameron
David R. Greenland
AuthorHouse
978-1-4490-1275-5
Three Stars (out of Five)

The typical memoir about rock bands takes a fairly predictable approach, focusing on the wildly hedonistic actions of the band members, including liberal doses of sex and drugs. Douglas Cameron's *Inside the Fire* is different in that it is more of a personal story about a musician who quite by accident lands a job as assistant road manager for The Doors.

Most fans of The Doors will be looking for behind-the-scenes stories about the legendary lead singer Jim Morrison. And they will fine them here. Cameron indicates in his introduction that one of the reasons he wrote the book was to answer the question, "What was Jim Morrison really like?" Cameron shares an insider's perspective on Morrison, suggesting that the singer was a rude drunk at best and an egotistical bully at worst. The author relates one episode in which a drunken Morrison loses his temper when Cameron tries to wipe something off of the singer's leather pants. Writes Cameron, "Jim was always in the midst of an emotional thunderstorm, regardless of where he found himself."

There is, however, a fundamental problem with the book's premise: Cameron was assistant road manager for a mere sixteen days. As a result, it is a stretch to call this a memoir about working with The Doors. Vince Treanor, the road manager who hired Cameron, emerges as the central character of the part of the book that covers Cameron's tenure with The Doors. Unfortunately, that part is just sixty pages long.

The next part of the book the takes place after Jim Morrison's death in 1971 and concerns Cameron's interactions with other members of The Doors and the parents of the singer's girlfriend. Also in this section are some insights about Morrison, courtesy of Vince Treanor. The final part is the transcript of a radio interview conducted with Cameron and The Doors' Ray Manzarek in 1984, in which Manzarek offers his take on Morrison. Also included are more than twenty pages of poorly reproduced black-and-white photographs, most of which are not of The Doors.

Diehard fans of The Doors may find that Cameron's book offers some details about Jim Morrison that have not been revealed by other works about the singer or his band. As a first-person account, the book does offer a behind-the-scenes view. For the most part, though, *Inside the Fire* is only brief snapshot of The Doors. As a result, it's a book whose title may promise more than it delivers.

Barry Silverstein