



■ What happens on tour stays on tour. Not any more in the case of a book by the former road manager of rock bands the Rolling Stones and Grateful Dead. **Derek Ogden reports**

Grateful for the Rolling Stones

Jt was the word 'reprobate' in the title that attracted me to the book. Oh, and the fact that it was about the Rolling Stones and Grateful Dead.

In another life as a rock music promoter in Britain, I'd come across more than my fair share of 'reprobates', aka unprincipled, reprehensible types, and was curious to compare notes.

You Can't Always Get What You Want. My Life with the Rolling Stones, the Grateful Dead and Other Wonderful Reprobates, by Sam Cutler, is an account of the author's chequered life leading some of the best rock acts by the hand between clubs, concert halls and stadiums around the world.

Cutler cut his entrepreneurial teeth on the burgeoning folk club scene in Britain in the 1960s. He once put on Paul Simon, who at the time was making a name in the clubs and pubs around London, and the singer/songwriter did not endear himself to the author.

'I remember him as an arrogant little prick who'd just written *The Sounds of Silence*', Cutler writes, 'and played acoustic guitar better than me. I disliked him, he knew it, and the feeling was mutual'.

Cutler stepped over the bodies of lesser or lazier promoters and up the ladder behind the scenes to put on the first free open-air concert in Britain - the Blind Faith gig in Hyde Park, London.

He followed this up with the Rolling Stones playing to half a million 'freeloaders' there and even had volunteers clean up the rubbish after the show in return for Stones LP records.

A focus of British police attention for years over their drug habits, Cutler reckons the result of the absence of trouble in the crowd and the pristine way they left the park, was that the constabulary pretty much left the Stones alone after that.

was perfectly placed to play a part in Both parents were card-carrying

members of the Communist Party and their home was a drop-in for some of the more rebellious activists of the time.

When he told his mother about the massive crowd at the Stones concert, she dismissively

opined the Chartists drew more people to their political and social reform meetings of the 19th century; and then how much money he was earning, she retorted: "It's not a proper job, though, is it?" She was not impressed.

Cutler got the full-time gig with the Rolling Stones when they sacked Alan Klein, who was also running the Apple company for the Beatles at the time, before their US tour.

Cutler accompanied Keith Richards to face Klein in his office. Klein let out a stream of invective, warning Cutler to watch his back.

Then he was gone. Keith pulled a switchblade from his pocket and stabbed it into the table, chuckling. They both grinned like naughty schoolboys.

The tour turned out to be surreal, with a cast of hangers-on, including the 70-year-old mother of one of them. Then there was Altamont. The reason for the book, says Cutler, is he wanted to get the Altamont business off his chest.

In order to counter adverse publicity about the massive amount of money they were making on their American tour, Cutler teed up a free concert on December 6, 1969, at the disused Altamont Speedway in northern California. A crowd of 300,000 turned up and, with little crowd control, everything deteriorated rapidly, culminating in a man being murdered by a Hells Angel in front of the stage while the Stones played on.

Cutler was left behind to make peace with the Angels, mobsters ... and the American people. He has his theories about why it happened and sets them out in the book.

After leaving the Rolling Stones, Cutler managed Grateful Dead tours.

Along the way he came into intimate contact with the heavyweights of the psychedelic music era, among them Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, The Band, the Allman Brothers, Pink Floyd and Eric Clapton.

Cutler lives in the Pacific area working with Australian and New Zealand artists.

He admits he got plenty of what he wanted and much of what he didn't. He speaks the truth when he concludes the access-all-areas memoir by saying: 'Some of the people of my generation paid a terrible price for our pleasures'. He should know, he was in the thick of things.

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