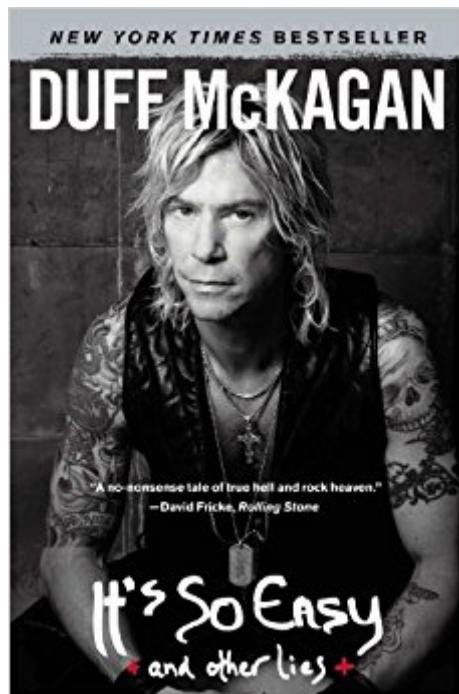


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# It's So Easy: And Other Lies



## Synopsis

A founding member of Guns N' Roses and Velvet Revolver and Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inductee shares the story of his rise to the pinnacle of fame and fortune, his struggles with alcoholism and drug addiction, his personal crash and burn, and his phoenix-like transformation. In 1984, at the age of twenty, Duff McKagan left his native Seattle partly to pursue music but mainly to get away from a host of heroin overdoses then decimating his closest group of friends in the local punk scene. In L.A. only a few weeks and still living in his car, he answered a want ad for a bass player placed by someone who identified himself only as "Slash." Soon after, the most dangerous band in the world was born. Guns N' Roses went on to sell more than 100 million albums worldwide. In *It's So Easy*, Duff recounts Guns' unlikely trajectory to a string of multiplatinum albums, sold-out stadium concerts, and global acclaim. But that kind of glory can take its toll, and it did—ultimately on Duff, as well as on the band itself. As Guns began to splinter, Duff felt that he himself was done, too. But his near death as a direct result of alcoholism proved to be his watershed, the turning point that sent him on a unique path to sobriety and the unexpected choices he has made for himself since. In a voice that is as honest as it is indelibly his own, Duff—one of rock's smartest and most articulate personalities—takes readers on a harrowing journey through the dark heart of one of the most notorious bands in rock-and-roll history and out the other side.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"You'll read this memoir from the former Guns N'Roses bass player for the sex, drugs, and rock and roll, but you'll remember it for what comes after recovery, family, and fulfillment." (Los Angeles Magazine) "In a book that mourns friendships and talent lost to drugs, his transformation is a relief and an inspiration. McKagan writes with honesty and even humility, seemingly refreshingly devoid of rock star egomania." (Shelf Awareness) "Honest, well-written" McKagan is surprisingly self-aware and candid, and he doesn't let himself off the hook easily. (Publishers Weekly) "In his solid debut, the author proves himself to be a legit writer. McKagan has a nice eye for details and a surprisingly good memory. He's proudly raw and harsh, refusing to hold back in terms of language and content" fans will be thrilled by this honest, detailed memoir." (Kirkus Reviews) "Fans will love the descriptions of the struggles and early triumphs of GNR, but McKagan's descriptions of his equally driven efforts at self-transformation are just as compelling (particularly his meditation on the redemptive power of reading and the satisfaction he receives in his intellectual as well as physical revitalization). Verdict: Rock fans and would-be rockers will find much to savor here. McKagan has packed a lot into his life and a lot of his life into this book. Readers will enjoy the ride." (Library Journal) "McKagan recounts his (tale) with flamboyance and an engaging wit." (Booklist)

Duff McKagan played bass for Guns N'Roses for twelve years and co-wrote many of their most iconic songs. The band was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2012. Duff formed Velvet Revolver with his former band mate Slash and fronts his own band, Loaded. He writes weekly columns for [Seattleweekly.com](http://Seattleweekly.com) and [ESPN.com](http://ESPN.com). McKagan lives in Seattle with his wife, supermodel Susan Holmes McKagan, and their two daughters. Visit [Duff-ItsSoEasy.com](http://Duff-ItsSoEasy.com).

I suppose I could wait until I'm done with the book to write this review, but I'm halfway through and I think I've got a good grasp of the book. This book is fantastic. It would be interesting for someone who isn't even a GNR fan because it is written so well from Duff's perspective and the feeling's he experienced along the way, from growing up in Seattle to his moving to L.A. and eventually forming GNR. You root for him, you feel empathy for him, you care about him. I'm at the point where the band is just starting to fall apart, and I can't wait to read this insider account. I fell in love with GNR when I was 12. My dad flipped out when he saw them on MTV and I knew all of their names. This was not appropriate for a 12 year old Jehovah's Witness! He cancelled MTV. lol But my friend had given me the tape and I made a copy and I labeled it something other than GNR. (I quit being a JW

a few years later and my taste in music grew even harder). I remember reading the rumors and hearing the news about AXL not performing well, or not performing whole sets, or not performing at all. Like I said, I'm looking forward to this current section in the book for the behind the scenes perspective. Also, I recommend the Documentary on Netflix of the same title with Duff reading portions of the book to an acoustic backing by his current band, Loaded, of GN'R songs and songs from Velvet Revolver. It's accompanied by apt animations and interviews with Slash, Matt Sorum, etc. I saw the Doc first, then rewatched it, then ordered the book! You will not regret buying this book, whether you're a GN'R fan, a fan of rock bands and how they form and get signed and the journeys they go on, or a fan of autobiographies that are well written and extremely interesting.

The author is gifted in many ways, his music, his obvious high intelligence, and he is also an alcoholic and previous heavy drug user. The book details how a modern rock band operates from the start to years later, when band members stop talking to each other and friends start dying from drug overdoses. It is not an easy read and, yet, the author comes out of the hell he was living to get sober. He marries a beautiful woman, has a beautiful family, gets a formal education, and appears to be living life on life's terms. I am glad I read his book and have no desire to read anything else on GNR's, this is enough for me. I wish him well on his sobriety and hope he finds a "group" to remind him how perilous it can be to do it alone.

Told through the eyes of Guns n' Roses bassist, Duff McKagan, is a story revolving not only his tenure with the band, but his experiences enduring all facets of challenges such as the music industry, drugs, illness, friendship and family life. The most intriguing part of this book was Duff's ability to immerse readers into his own personal experiences by expressing himself with clarity and in a concise manner sans the elaborate details that may clutter effective storytelling. I was quite impressed with Duff's ability to write such a well written book; an obvious notion reflecting his intelligence and vivid expressiveness. Whether or not you're a Guns n' Roses fan, 'It's So Easy: and Other Lies' is a book anyone can enjoy. Duff's story chronicles his journey through the music industry and what it took for him to understand his financial situation and how to control it. His marriage to Susan McKagan inspiring a change in priorities for not only himself, but those around him as well. The battles with drug addiction leading to a near death experience revealing the struggle was not only his own, but his family's as well. This is a great book and I highly recommend it for those fans and non-fans alike! Enjoy!

I think I probably wrote that on a few junior high notebooks back in the day. GNR was the only band of my era that I ever really loved (and D.M. was the cutie). I was a pianist, a music snob, I loved Elton and Billy and Tori but not many bands. I listened to hair/glam rock more than any other kind of music in my teenage years, but I didn't \*love\* any of those other bands, even the ones I thought were talented, and around the time GNR well and truly broke up, I checked out of pop culture altogether for more than a decade because I just didn't care any more. This is the first rock band biography I have ever read, though I considered buying Slash's book when it came out. (I'll admit I also found his type of sexy appealing as a teenager, though it was always clear Duff was the solid one, even then.) I read a few pages of *Slash* in the store; his style annoyed me, so I didn't buy it. After I read Duff's book, though, I had to have it. I wanted to know more. (I almost bought Steven's book too, but for now the free sample has me convinced I shouldn't.) I don't read rock biographies because 1) I usually don't care about the people who write them and 2) I like for things to be well-written, which is not what one expects from rock burnouts. Then I saw the reviews for this book. I read a lot of books; I have \*never\* seen a book with such positive reviews; not any book I was interested in, anyway. And I had no idea that Duff had done so well for himself after GNR because, as I said, I had checked out of pop culture, long before the internet. Back when I was actually paying attention, I depended on MTV news and *Headbanger's Ball* for band gossip, with which they were sparing. I agree with the vast majority of the reviewers. This book is beautifully written. For the literary snobs, perhaps it's a little formulaic (chronology games), but nevertheless executed with a genuine and sophisticated touch. More importantly, the book tells an important story, not just for fans of GNR and late 80s hard rock, but for anyone who has struggled with addiction, or the addiction of a loved one— for anyone who is trying to figure out how to be a good parent after a rough life (though Duff concedes that this is largely dependent on socioeconomic status)— for anyone seeking to get in shape after a life of body abuse— for anyone who simply loves a well-spun tale. I remember counting down the days to the release of *Use Your Illusion* with a day calendar, the kind where you tear off a page for each new day. I saved the page for September 17, 1991 for a long time. My dad had made us a tape of the songs on AFD that he thought were semi-appropriate (without album art); he figured we were old enough to handle the whole album(s) with *UYI*. I have seen very few popular musicians/bands in concert, but I saw GNR twice in 1992, once in Biloxi, and again in New Orleans, at the Superdome, 13 years to the day (August 29) before Katrina destroyed everything along the coast from NO to Biloxi and beyond. (There is video from the Biloxi Coliseum on YouTube; check it out.) I don't remember GNR coming on late in Biloxi. Maybe as much as 45 minutes late? I don't

remember; all I remember is that 1) the show was good, though we were too close to the ginormous speakers, and 2) Soundgarden was terrible. I came to like Soundgarden later, and I could never reconcile the cleverness of "Burden in my Hand" and "Black Hole Sun" with the crap band that I heard on stage that night. I was 13, and I was there with my dad, who probably only took me because he was just divorced and trying to be the cool parent. In New Orleans (by which time I was 14), GNR was LATE. I definitely remember it. They were so late that we wondered if they would ever come on, and many people did not stick around to find out. They were so late that they had a camera going around the place looking for chicks (probably plants) to flash the camera in order to keep the audience entertained. (Did I mention that my dad was also really religious? Another byproduct of the divorce.) It was one of the most awkward moments of my childhood. I should start at the beginning of that concert. Faith No More was just as terrible as Soundgarden had been; the difference was that I liked Faith No More before I heard them. When they broke up not too long after this concert, I didn't even notice. (I read about it in Slash's book.) I would never have gone to see Metallica if they hadn't been playing with GNR, because I didn't care much about Metallica (though I loved the beef they added to the GNR ticket). I thought they had some good songs, more on the Black Album than I expected, but none as good as the pure genius which was GNR's best. We got our money's worth from Metallica that night, though. They put on an awesome show. I didn't know half of the songs they played, but their energy was amazing. The impression I came away with was how \*professional\* they were next to GNR (and Faith No More). Somehow, I managed to convince my Dad to stay and wait for GNR to come on. It was close to two hours, if I recall, after Metallica left, maybe a little less, maybe a little more. It was ridiculous. The boob-flashing chicks only did so much to placate the natives. The energy in the audience grew more and more frustrated and negative. There were hecklers shouting. Something might have been chanted; if so, I don't remember what. Maybe it was "BS", maybe it was something else. Duff, if you ever read this, I want you to know how much it means to me that you were able to describe so well what this was like from backstage, how that "rumble" of dissatisfaction made you feel, made everyone feel. It was so easy to imagine, out there in the crowd, that all of you were somewhere on Bourbon Street living it up while we were voicing our dissatisfaction with no one who could do anything about it. When you guys finally came out, it was terrible. I remember specifically that Slash played terribly, which made me sad because I really admire his musicianship. I don't remember how you played; all I remember is that you said some crazy stuff at the mic. Or maybe that was just Get in the Ring! (To which my reaction has always been, ?????) Now I know why it was so terrible; the long delay frustrated you guys as much as it did us, and you were all self-medicating in the most self-destructive way possible. In the end, it

was all kind of appropriate, in a screwed-up way. But having been there for the "rumble" made your description of it seem really personal, to me. It's kind of silly; if Slash can be believed, you guys played to 7 million people on that tour, and probably 4-5 million of them experienced the same thing. You understood our frustration, and it affected you more than it affected us, ainsi tout est pardonné. En outre, mille remerciements du fond du cœur à cœur pour la musique fantastique, et pour votre livre magnifique. Vive l'armes!

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