



An Underground Education: The Unauthorized and Outrageous Supplement to Everything You Thought You Knew out Art, Sex, Business, Crime, Science, Medicine, and Other Fields of Human

Richard Zacks

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The best kind of knowledge is uncommon knowledge.

Okay, so maybe you know all the stuff you're supposed to know--that there are teenier things than atoms, that *Remembrance of Things Past* has something to do with a perfumed cookie, that the Monroe Doctrine means we get to take over small South American countries when we feel like it. But really, is this kind of knowledge going to make you the hit of the cocktail party, or the loser spending forty-five minutes examining the host's bookshelves?

Wouldn't you rather learn things like how the invention of the bicycle affected the evolution of underwear? Or that the 1949 Nobel Prize for Medicine was awarded to a doctor who performed lobotomies with a household ice pick? Or how Catherine the Great really died? Or that heroin was sold over the counter not too long ago?

For the truly well-rounded "intellectual," nothing fascinates so much as the subversive, the contrarian, the suppressed, and the bizarre. Richard Zacks, auto-didact extraordinaire, has unloosed his admittedly strange mind and astonishing research abilities upon the entire spectrum of human knowledge, ferreting out endlessly fascinating facts, stories, photos, and images guaranteed to make you laugh, gasp in wonder, and occasionally shudder at the depths of human depravity. The result of his labors is this fantastically illustrated quasi-encyclopedia that provides alternative takes on art, business, crime, science, medicine, sex (lots of that), and many other facets of human experience.

Immensely entertaining, and arguably enlightening, *An Underground Education* is the only book that explains the birth of motion pictures using photos of naked baseball players.

Richard Zacks is the author of *History Laid Bare: Love, Sex and Perversity from the Ancient Etruscans to Warren G. Harding*, which was excerpted in classy magazines like *Harper's* and earned the attention of the even classier *New York Times*, which noted that "Zacks specializes in the raunchy and perverse." The Georgia State Legislature voted on whether to ban the book from public libraries. He has studied Arabic, Greek, Latin, French, Italian, and Hebrew, and received the Phillips Classical Greek Award at the University of Michigan. He has also told his publisher that he made a living in Cairo cheating royalty from a certain Arab country at games of chance, although the claim remains unverified. His writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Time*, *Life*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The Village Voice*, *TV Guide*, and similarly diverse publications. Zacks is married and busy warping the minds of his two children, Georgia and Ziegfield. He resides in New York City, and can be reached via e-mail at rzacks@echonyc.com.

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Ralph Smith:

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