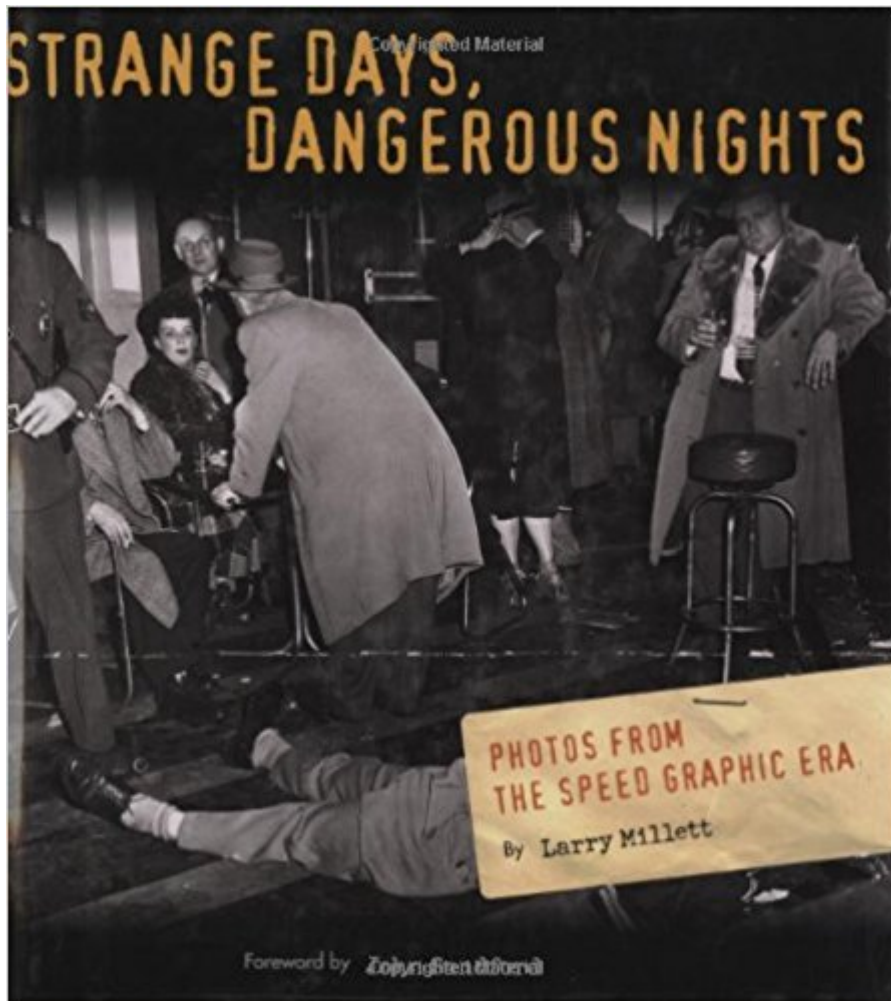


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Strange Days, Dangerous Nights: Photos From The Speed Graphic Era



Synopsis

Fat men's races and fall-out shelters, murder victims and loose women, cheerleaders and immigrants, celebrities and children in distress were just some of the urban curiosities splashed across the pages of city newspapers during the Speed Graphic era (1930s to 1950s). Championed by acclaimed news photographers like Arthur Fellig (a.k.a. Weegee), the Speed Graphic camera produced a new visual style that was as blunt, powerful, and immediate as a left hook. Driven by the desire to fill newspaper pages with sensational images, press photographers shot everything, day and night: automobile accidents, fires, murders, all the cop news that fought for a hot spot on the Front Page. And they covered uncounted numbers of social affairs—pictures called "grip-and-grins" in the trade: school events, sports, celebrities, oddities both of nature and humanity.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

One advantage of this fascinating book is that you'll see these photos in about the same quality as the original prints. The readers of the two St Paul dailies only saw them printed in a relatively coarse screen but here they are presented in 175dpi on quality paper. The old Speed Graphic captured every detail with its in-your-face blinding flash. The photos in the eight chapters show an intriguing look back to life in the city from 1945 to 1965, plenty of crime scene stuff (a few are very graphic if you are worried about seeing such photos) but also the regular city newspaper fare, celebrities, civic functions, public gatherings, kids having fun and plenty of sports coverage. An interesting chapter covers the changing face of St Paul, as old buildings are torn down to be replaced with new

commercial units and suburbs. Larry Millet does an excellent job of captioning the two hundred photos (mostly one to a page) not just a few words but two hundred or so for each image and his intro is a succinct review of the importance of news photos to local and city papers across America decades ago. Books about such photos from this period do rather concentrate on sensational crime and blood because they are mostly missing from today's papers. Millett explains that back then the press and the police enjoyed a cosy relationship and mostly didn't ask too many awkward questions about the police version of events. The papers got access to crime scenes for graphic photos and the cops had their faces in the morning editions for fighting crime. TV covers it all today but really gets no closer than the yellow crime-scene tape.

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