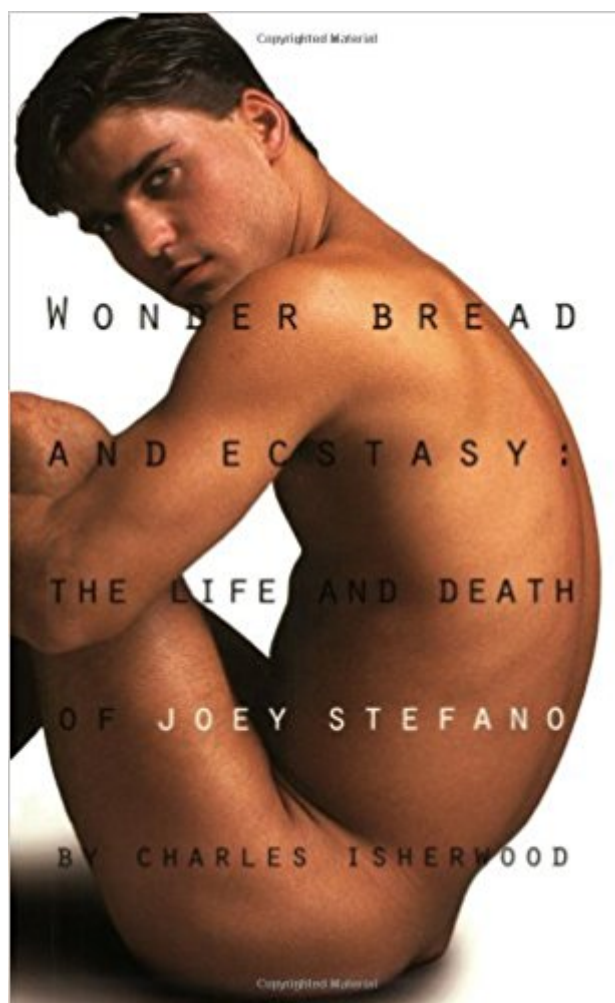


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Wonder Bread & Ecstasy: The Life And Death Of Joey Stefano



Synopsis

The meteoric rise and sudden, dramatic fall of a young gay male porn star.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Video pornography has been a staple of gay male culture for decades, but there is little written about the people who perform or produce this entertainment. Charles Isherwood has written a modern tragedy about the life and death of porn star Joey Stefano. After a rapid climb to the top, Stefano died of an overdose at age 26. Isherwood is a good reporter who holds no illusions about the porn industry. *Ecstasy and Wonder Bread* is both a hard-hitting exposé of an industry that uses people up and then spits them out and a sympathetic portrait of a young man whose desire for attention and fame was equaled only by his inability to say no.

Though it was ruled accidental, the drug-related death of 26-year-old gay porn star Joey Stefano^{ne} Nicholas Iacona^{garnered} attention from the tabloid press and prompted a television talk-show host to ask whether the sex industry was to blame. Isherwood writes in defense of the industry, and as a partial response to the accusations traces Stefano's life through a stereotypically troubled upbringing in Pennsylvania that culminated in his sporadically successful careers in dancing, prostitution and Los Angeles's pornographic film industry. This last achievement was unheard of at the time, specifically because the young superstar was a "bottom"^{defined} by the author as "the passive performer in anal sex, the active one in oral"^{and} it was believed that gay audiences

preferred "tops," or more "masculine" performers. Stefano's career peaked when he won the Best Actor AVN, the industry's equivalent to the Oscar, for his performance in *More of a Man*, but then his popularity faded. Coupled with this was his knowledge that he was HIV positive, and Stefano increasingly numbed himself with a variety of drugs including Ecstasy and Special K (ketamine). In his first book, Isherwood struggles to objectively report these events, providing a brief overview of the inner workings of the gay pornographic film business. This makes up somewhat for the lack of personal information on Stefano that would have enriched this account. Otherwise, much of the story is better suited to a feature-length article. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This book illustrates the gay porn industry in the late 80's, and mid 90's, centered around Joey Stefano. He was the hottest actor to hit the scene. The trouble is, staying on top (especially when you are a bottom). This is a frank, honest look at Joey, and the industry. Names are named, places are placed. It was well written, and if you are interested in the subjects, it is a nice read.

A fascinating story of the glory days of gay porn and the tragic life and death of Nicholas Iacona aka Joey Stefano. If you take the book at face value it's just a story about a drug addict who used his charm, good looks and extreme appetite for sex and his willingness to do anything to get into porn and then his inevitable fall. However, Isherwood did a good job putting together the pieces with the people he was able to interview at the time who knew Stefano and he is very descriptive and keeps the reader interested. It is a good read but a tragic and an interesting story.

Bought by accident, but ended up reading. A sad story, but moving story. What a tragedy if you had the whole world, but gave up your soul! Amazing how easy it seems to get trapped on the wrong road. Fame, money...but all the traps! Fit the mold for our morally bankrupt society, but at a tragic price. Worth the read! Dave (in Colorado)

What I've read I've liked. Personally I was curious about this individual, and so far my curiosity has been satisfied ... no far.

With the explosion of porn distribution on the net and the constant rise and fall of "stars" being basically anyone paid to be naked for an orgasm in front of a camera at any time in their lives, the story of Joey Stefano is a cautionary tale that many ought heed. This entertainingly written and fairly well researched biography is a brief but revealing text. Perhaps Stefano's life could not carry a

longer book, either. In any event, the reader will join him on a fast down escalator into self-destruction that shows the reality of low self-esteem, emotional insecurity, and short life span (in the marketplace or, like Stefano, literally) that often marks the human fabric of this industry. Well worth the investment of time and money, not least because a number of the people in the book, like Chi Chi LaRue, continue as active presences in the business of the meat market.

Met him while living his last year in Miami. He really wanted to get away from the drugs and porn but it cost him his life in the end. He lived a hard life and ended up in an unmarked grave in NJ. I wish he could have found what he was looking for while here.

Not enough information about his early life. It would not serve as a biography but I don't think it was meant as such. A lost opportunity to delve into the gay porn industry

It is a very good book, which shows not only the life of a pornstar, but also to describe the gay porn industry. Besides also be very interesting the fact of, when a new character appears, the author makes a brief biography, which helps to situate ourselves in this history. Personally, I always thought Joey Stefano very exciting, with a different beauty. I was born 18 days before him, in another country with a culture and a very different sense of relationship (but with the same prejudice). Joey was part of my discovery of gay porn videos just when gay videos began appearing here in Brazil. So I knew Joey Stefano, but the one from the videos and magazines, but, for example, I had never realized his importance (such as being the first "bottom" respected in this industry) But more important of all was meeting Nick Lacona Jr. This book deserves to be read and, without pseudo moral prejudices. And nowadays, with the internet, you can see what is described (videos and photos), but in a different way, a way with the aura of bitterness that accompanied the life of this beautiful young man.

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