



Impossible: Rodney Mullen, Ryan Sheckler, And The Fantastic History Of Skateboarding

By Cole Louison

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The Impossible aims to get skateboarding right. Journalist Cole Louison gets inside the history, culture, and major personalities of skating.

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Editorial Review

Review

“David Foster Wallace on a skateboard.” — *GQ*

“With its infectious enthusiasm, precise lyricism, and rigorous deeply-felt reporting, the book brings to life the sport’s historical roots, its cultural significance, and most of all, its artistic possibilities. I was hooked from the start. —Ian Crouch, *The New Yorker*

“The last time I thought seriously about professional skateboarders, I was hoping to become one. This book blew it wide open for me. Until now, only obsessive freaks had any idea how interesting this sport is. And even obsessive freaks should stick around for the tale Louison has so lucidly spun. —John Jeremiah Sullivan, author of *Blood Horses* and *Pulphead*

“I’d never so much as stood on a board, let alone heard the names Sheckler and Mullen, but I found myself entranced by the fascinating cultural movement they created. *The Impossible* is a universal story, told in imminently readable fashion by a tremendously talented writer.” --Michael Koryta, *New York Times* best-selling author of *The Ridge* and *Those Who Wish Me Dead*

“The book provides a deep and nuanced insight into how contemporary skateboarding has evolved and where it will go. It honors the beauty, danger, and complexity of the sport, and lays bare its physical and psychological demands, and greatness. *The Impossible* is some of the finest writing on skating I’ve seen. I read it in one sitting.” —Bret Anthony Johnston, best-selling author of *Corpus Christi* and *Remember Me Like This*

From the Back Cover

Skateboarding: the background, technicality, culture, rebellion, marketing, conflict, and future of the global sport as seen through two of its most influential geniuses

Since it all began half a century ago, skateboarding has come to mystify some and to mesmerize many, including its tens of millions of adherents throughout America and the world. And yet, as ubiquitous as it is today, its origins, manners, and methods are little understood.

The Impossible aims to get skateboarding right. Journalist Cole Louison gets inside the history, culture, and major personalities of skating. He does so largely by recounting the careers of the sport’s Yoda—Rodney Mullen, who, in his mid-forties, remains the greatest skateboarder in the world, the godfather of all modern skateboarding tricks—and its Luke Skywalker—Ryan Sheckler, who became its youngest pro athlete and a celebrity at thirteen. The story begins in the 1960s, when the first boards made their way to land in the form of off-season surfing in southern California. It then follows the sport’s spikes, plateaus, and drops—including its billion-dollar apparel industry and its connection with art, fashion, and music.

In *The Impossible*, we come to know intimately not only skateboarding, but also two very different, equally fascinating geniuses who have shaped the sport more than anyone else.

About the Author

Cole Louison is a writer for GQ magazine and has contributed to Fader, McSweeney's, the New York Times, Buzzsaw and All Things Considered. While at Ithaca College's Park School of Communications, Louison majored in journalism and reported for the Ithacan and the Ithacan Journal. He also helped found one of the top alternative college publications: Buzzsaw Haircut.

Upon graduation, Louison moved to Martha's Vineyard and began reporting for the Vineyard Gazette. While there, he became an island correspondent for WGBH Boston NPR and later moved to Cape Cod to work further for the station.

After a year on the Cape, a Vermont art colony offered him a writing grant, moving him to Johnson, Vermont. The one-month residency turned into a job offer, and Louison spent a year in Vermont before selling his truck and moving to New York City in fall 2004. Once there he became an editor at McSweeney's Quarterly Journal, joined the New Yorker softball team, and temped for Vogue, Esquire, and Vanity Fair before coming to GQ, where he works today while continuing to write on a freelance basis.

For GQ he has covered a variety of subjects and interviewed Bill Clinton, Reggie Miller, Dave Navarro, Big Boi, Mohammad Ali, Ted Nugent, Don King, David Remnick, the world authority on Samuel Beckett, Jim Jarmusch, and Jean-Claude Killy. His work has also appeared in the New York Times, Outside, and the Los Angeles Times.

Users Review

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Harold Martinez:

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