



# Snuff

*Chuck Palahniuk*

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**Snuff** Chuck Palahniuk

**From the master of literary mayhem and provocation, a full-frontal Triple X novel that goes where no American work of fiction has gone before**

Cassie Wright, porn priestess, intends to cap her legendary career by breaking the world record for serial fornication. On camera. With six hundred men. *Snuff* unfolds from the perspectives of Mr. 72, Mr. 137, and Mr. 600, who await their turn on camera in a very crowded green room. This wild, lethally funny, and thoroughly researched novel brings the huge yet underacknowledged presence of pornography in contemporary life into the realm of literary fiction at last. Who else but Chuck Palahniuk would dare do such a thing? Who else could do it so well, so unflinchingly, and with such an incendiary (you might say) climax?

## Snuff Details

Date : Published May 20th 2008 by Doubleday

ISBN : 9780385517881

Author : Chuck Palahniuk

Format : Hardcover 208 pages

Genre : Fiction, Contemporary, Novels

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## From Reader Review Snuff for online ebook

### Jonathan Ashleigh says

This was too filthy, even by my standards.

But somehow, the copy I have was signed by Chuck Palahniuk so it is a book I will never get rid of.

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### Oriana says

#### before reading

I'm presuming that this will be enough of a departure from *Against the Day* that it will help me remember how to read regular books.

(Also noted: the print is *really* big. Odd.)

#### after reading

Ok I'm really sorry to say this, but this book *blew*. I suppose that given the subject matter, that's kind of a double entendre, but fuck it. Actually, you know what? That's about as hard as it seems Palahniuk tried to make this book any good. It was like some college student aping Palahniuk for a second-rate writing class. A pale, pale imitation of the things that I know he can do really well. What a fucking letdown.

I guess you could call this a spoiler, but probably everyone who cares already knows that the plot here is that Cassie Wright is setting a porn world record by getting fucked by 600 guys in a row. The story is told in alternating perspectives by three of the men in line (numbers 72, 137, and 600) and by the "talent wrangler" who set the whole thing up. The multiple narrators — which worked *so well* in *Rant* — here are stupid and not believable. All three men talk basically the same, with a few halfhearted token phrases thrown in to differentiate them. (For example, #72 constantly says "I don't know." Oh yeah, Chuck, *great*.) I was hoping and hoping that the last chapter would be by Cassie herself, in order to possibly do something trickierish and clever with a reversal of some kind at the end, but oh no. She basically never talks, and Chuck misses a chance to actually *say* something, make some kind of statement about the kind of woman who would get banged by 600 guys.

The whole book feels like just an excuse to catalogue three things: gross facts about how movie stars keep themselves beautiful & viable (cutting the heel off one shoe to make your ass grind together sexily, drinking crushed eggshells to get a smoky, husky voice); unfunny names for men who jerk off a lot (monkey-milkers, ham-whammers, sock-soakers); and clever fake porn movie names based on books & movies (*To Drill a Mockingbird*, *Chitty Chitty Gang Bang*, *Gropes of Wrath*, *A Midsummer Night's Ream*). And look, I love a good porn pun, but that is *not enough*, Mr. Palahniuk, to use as the backbone of an entire novel.

Sure there's some twists and a smidge of character development, but I'm telling you, the whole thing was just uninspired, insipid, and boring. Fuck.

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### Mel says

This book was a disaster. I don't understand why this book exists at all. I don't know why it was published,

why anyone thought it would be a good idea, and why I bothered to read it.

This is the first time in my life a book has made me question reading. It made me question why we read and why people write. If this is the kind of stuff being published, why do I read. I get nothing from this. No benefit and no education. I don't know why reading and writing has become such a big industry when this is all we have to show for it. It's really an embarrassment to the literary world and I personally didn't enjoy questioning why I bother to read.

Now, I might have felt a bit different about this book had it created some sort of awareness to the realities of the porn industry. There are so many books lately creating awareness to mental health, diseases and cancer, abuse, etc. I thought you know that maybe this would create awareness about the porn industry and maybe break some of the taboos surrounding it. This did neither of those. I didn't really find it to be groundbreaking and give people a new take on porn, I actually saw it as doing the exact opposite. It makes them out to look like disgusting gross people who have nothing else in the world. I've never been on a porn set, never been in porn, have very little knowledge of how porn actually works, so maybe I am wrong here, but I feel like this was a kind of crude depiction of the industry. I can't even really tell if this book was offensive at all because it was so poorly written.

The writing was horrible. It's clustered, confusing, and grammatically terrible. Things like "I'm touching the necklace Cassie **gived** me" and "**don't lets** be coy." Also, he had this habit of giving some weird fact and ending it with "true fact." Got old really fast. Maybe this is a usual thing for Palahniuk or his signature or something but I really was underwhelmed with the writing from a man I have heard so much about,

This is a completely sorry excuse for a plot. Mostly because, there isn't one. Okay so you have 600 men waiting to have sex with a porn star and you get to hear from 3 of those men. That's not really what I'd call a A+ plot. It's quite lacking. There are 600 guys and you chose to focus on 3 of them? I mean I get it because of the connection between 2 of them, but why did he include guy 137? Plus why did this have to turn into a weird incestuous sort of plot? Having one of the 600 be her son and another of the 600 be her sons father just was weird. Like this brings an already messed up family dynamic into the most messed up scenario. Not to mention you have Guy 600 aka baby daddy urging his son to have sex with his mom, and later urging him to kill his mom. I really don't get it. Then there were useless beauty tips thrown in which I really didn't see the point to. They just seemed to mostly add length to this already short book.

I feel like Palahniuk really only wrote this book because he wanted to show how creative he is at naming porn movies. There were at least 2 porn titles a page. It was excessive and useless to the "plot". I've never read a Palahniuk book before. I'd heard great things because he's the creator of Fight Club (which I've never seen the movie either) so I expected greatness from this man. I was let down like I've never been let down before.

This was my first... and last Palahniuk book. He's really not my type of author if this is what he considers publishable material.

### **Book Challenge book # 31 - A Book With Bad Reviews**

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#### **Cristina Boncea says**

3.5/5

Chuck nu m-a dezam?git. Povestea asta a fost altceva, a avut un plot frumos ?i un final pe m?sur?. Cel pu?in ?n Snuff, Chuck nu s-a complicat cu descrieri inutile iar totul a fost scurt ?i la obiect, dup? cum spune ?i

descrierea c?r?ii. Avem parte de patru perspective diferite: Sheila ?i numele 72, 137 ?i 600. Aceste numere reprezint? ni?te b?rba?i veni?i pentru filmarea celui mai legendar film porno din istorie, în care Cassie Wright face sex cu 600 de b?rba?i într-o singur? zi, f?r? pauz?. Sheila este asistenta ?i mâna dreapt? a lui Cassie, o actri?? porno foarte iubit? în universul acestui roman. Num?rul 72 e un tân?r care e sigur de faptul c? femeia îi e mam? biologic?, num?rul 137 o apreciaz? pe Cassie din punctul de vedere al lucrurilor pe care le-ar putea realiza împreun? iar b?rbatul cu num?rul 600 este cel care insist? s? intre ultimul în scen?, fiind ?i cel care a adus-o pe Cassie în bran??.

Lucrurile nu cap?t? cu adev?rat sens pân? în ultimele pagini. Odat? cu perspectivele celor trei b?rba?i, primim ?i un background story al lor. Ideea e urm?toarea: num?rul 600 are o pastil? cu cianur? la el, pe care vrea s? i-o ofere lui Cassie întrucât e sigur c? filmul realizat în acea zi va fi un snuff - adic? un film ce con?ine o moarte real? a cuiva. Num?rul 72 vrea s? îi ofere mamei sale o via?? nou?. Lucrurile se întâmpl? într-un mod complet nea?teptat... la un moment dat, pu?tiul încure? o pastil? de viagra cu cea de cianur?, primit? de la num?rul 600. Ce va face el? Moare într-adev?r Cassie, dup? ce face sex cu 600 de b?rba?i? Cartea asta e plin? de plot twist-uri ?i mi s-a p?rut foarte comic?. Am observat unele lucruri care nu s-au p?strat în traducere, în sensul c? probabil mi-ar fi pl?cut pu?in mai mult cartea dac? a? fi citit-o în englez?, îns? trebuie s? recunosc c? m-a intrigat pe tot parcursul lecturii. Toat? frumuse?ea st? în finalul frumos, violent, spontan. Ideea este c? motivul pentru care Cassie a decis s? accepte propunerea Sheilei de a filma acest film este dorin?a de a-i l?sa mo?tenire copilului pe care l-a abandonat banii câ?tiga?i, copil pe care l-a f?cut cu b?rbatul nr. 600, care a drogat-o ?i a f?cut-o s? renun?e la visurile ei anterioare. Este acest copil într-adev?r b?rbatul cu nr. 72?

Cu siguran?? îmi doresc s? citesc mai multe lucruri de la Chuck, poate chiar mai complexe c?ci aceasta mi s-a p?rut un scurt joc, un demo; mi-a pl?cut stilul de scriere, asta e cel mai important. Sunt mai mult decât convins? c? Chuck a scris multe alte c?r?i ce îmi vor pl?cea. Recomand aceast? carte pentru o zi ploioas?, pentru a v? delecta, a citi ceva bolnav, dar nu foarte dark, o distrac?ie de moment. De asemenea, în carte ve?i g?si foarte multe informa?ii despre diver?i actori celebri, cât ?i date despre sex ?i industria porno - chestie care m-a atras de la bun început la Snuff. Pot spune c? este chiar o satir? a acestei industrii, multe elemente prezentate având darul de a ridiculiza aceast? lume, f?r? a sus?ine pentru nicio secund? c? ar exista ?i ceva bun în meseria de actor porno.

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## Chris says

I don't believe I've ever read (or heard of) any good fiction written about the porn industry. Drug addiction and alcoholism have been written about *ad nauseum*, but the porn industry -- a bizarre world in which so many of its participants (from the actors to the viewers) have hit a rock bottom similar to that of the most addicted alcoholic or dope fiend -- seems to be a tougher nut to crack, if you will. Maybe it has to do with the old "write what you know" philosophy. Any writer can drink himself into oblivion or go on a drug binge for a while and then write about it. It would take a special kind of writer to do porn (or hang around porn stars or watch endless amount of porn) for a couple of years and then write about it.

Approximately ten years ago, David Foster Wallace wrote an essay ("Big Red Son," which can be found in his book of essays *Consider the Lobster*) about the porn industry after he attended the annual Adult Video News Awards (the Academy Awards of porn). It was filled with everything a fan/admirer of DFW would expect to find in his writing: humor, insight, unique observations, excruciating detail, and heavy doses of The Truth. And lots of footnotes, including one in which he likens Peter North's ejaculations to mortar rounds.

Shortly after this essay was published, one of DFW's fan sites, The Howling Fantods! reported that he was rumored to be working on a novel set in the porn industry. Unfortunately, those were just rumors and no such novel was ever published, which is a shame because that novel could very well have been the greatest novel

about porn ever written. After reading Chuck Palahniuk's embarrassing attempt to tackle the subject in *Snuff*, I'm even more disappointed that DFW never wrote a porn novel because it would have, at the very least, saved me from ever having to read this dreck. I highly doubt Mr. Palahniuk would have ventured anywhere near this subject matter if a talent like DFW had already thoroughly dissected it.

If DFW's novel would have been a Peter North-like mortar round capable of coating the faces of three or four women, then *Snuff* is a premature ejaculation dripping down some 16-year-old kid's boxers before he can even get his girlfriend's bra off. In less than 200 pages, Palahniuk manages to include at least 50, maybe closer to 100, mock titles for porn movies, such as *To Drill A Mockingbird*, *The Da Vinci Load*, and *The Tale of Two Titties*. I had fun doing that when I was 14. Then you've got a female character who thinks of all men as masturbators and calls them pud-pullers, yogurt-yankers, jerk-jockeys, and on and on, never using the same hilarious name twice. There must be close to 100 of these brilliant gems scattered throughout the book. Sure, this stuff can be funny in small doses but using the same joke a hundred times? I could go into great detail about the lifeless narrators/characters, the plotless plot, and the twists that weren't really twists since you knew they were coming a long, long time before they came, much like most male porn stars, now that I think about it. I could do that, but I think I've already put more time into this review than Chuck put into writing this book, so I think it's time to pull out prematurely. Get it? Imagine a groaner like this on every single page.

This was the first Palahniuk book that I've read and it will likely be the last, which is too bad because he seems like a guy who takes chances and tries to write about topics that others don't. I imagine that this is why people like him. He's edgy. He's unique. He's brave. Unfortunately, as far as I can see from this book, he's not a good writer.

David Foster Wallace was every bit as edgy, unique, and brave as Chuck Palahniuk, but he was so much more. What I loved most about him was that, no matter what the topic was, he peeled back its layers until there was nothing left to peel and all of the sadness, hilarity, banality, and ugliness of that topic had been revealed. I'm probably going a bit too far here given that I've only read one of Palahniuk's books, but Chuck seems like a guy with no interest in peeling back the layers. He can sell his books and gather his loyal following without any of that deep thinking.

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## Jason Pettus says

(Today's review is much longer than Goodreads' word-count limit; find the entire essay at the Chicago Center for Literature and Photography [cclapcenter.com]. I am the original author of this essay, as well as the owner of CCLaP; it is not being reprinted here illegally.)

As I'm sure a certain amount of CCLaP's readers are already aware, there's a new type of pornography that's become more and more popular within the last half-decade now, a type that I'm positive will eventually say more about the Bush Era to future historians than just about any other cultural detritus we leave behind. Known by various names -- including hate porn, gonzo porn, apocalypse porn and Nazi porn -- the videos themselves can sometimes vary widely in actual subject matter, but with all of them sharing a number of common ideological traits: they all feature cartoonishly outrageous sex acts and concepts; and they all revel in the most cruel, cold, inhuman ways that the entire topic of sex can even be looked at in the first place. So in other words, imagine an orgy between a group of Nazi soldiers and a group of Berlin prostitutes at the end of WWII, the night before the Russians are set to invade and slaughter them all; imagine the kind of sex that would take place under such circumstances, and you suddenly have a disturbingly clear picture of the exact type of pornography currently making more money post-9/11 than any other type of porn in existence.

It's a subject that's been practically *begging* for someone to write a brilliant postmodern novel about, precisely because it brings up so many disturbing issues concerning the human condition, sexism, the long-term mental damage that a fascist society causes all of its citizens, and a lot more; and wouldn't you know, just leave it up to Chuck Freaking Palahniuk to be that first mainstream postmodern novelist to do so. Because ladies and gentlemen, the topic I'm talking about today is exactly the subject of Palahniuk's newest novel, the short and terse sex-horror tale *Snuff*; and before you read any more of today's essay, before you ever go to add the book to your Amazon wish list, you need to be aware that *this is the ugliest book about sex ever published by a mainstream press*, and that it has the potential to cause lingering graphic nightmares in anyone not already versed on the subject of apocalypse porn. (Indeed, chapter 25 alone contains what might just be the ugliest story about sex ever written in human history; and oh, believe me, *you'll* know what I'm talking about when you finally read it yourself.)

Make no mistake, the story *has* to be this ugly for Palahniuk to make his point -- his point, after all, being to examine why this kind of porn has become so popular during the 2000s, and why certain people in certain societies are attracted to it -- but it's an incredibly disturbing story nonetheless, a story so disturbing that you owe it to yourself to seriously ponder whether or not you actually want to read such a thing. And that, frankly, is probably the most chilling detail of all; that Palahniuk's whole point seems to be that we in America are simply living in a very disturbing society right now, a torture-tolerant, celebrity-obsessed, apocalypse-embracing neocon paradise that is causing more and more mental damage to our collective psyche, something that none of us want to publicly acknowledge which is why the problem is getting worse instead of better. Ultimately, just like most of his other books, *Snuff* is a cracked funhouse mirror being held up to contemporary society; and just like most of his other books, it's a view that many people will not want to look at whatsoever, or in some cases even have the stomach to stand.

The novel is, in fact, a look at a "gangbang," which for the purposes of this review needs to be explained in a little more detail; because, see, there's a difference in porn terms between a commercial gangbang (something filmed and released all the time in that industry) and, say, a group of drunk frat boys doing something unspeakable to a passed-out undergrad in the middle of the night in their rec-room. Because in the porn world, these gangbangs are mostly publicity stunts, the numbers ratcheted up to impossible levels for the amount of press such things receive (and hence the number of units sold afterwards); 200, 300, 400 people sometimes in a single session, the entire thing very clinical and regulated and ritualized, about as erotic as trying to get several thousand people through a line at a rollercoaster at an amusement park on a Saturday afternoon. This is why such videos are sometimes called "gonzo porn," why I say that it's the concept behind the video that is just as important as the actual content; because the actual sex in these "gangbang" videos barely exists, with many of these events for example allowing each "performer" only 60 seconds apiece with the "star" (timed with a stopwatch and everything), most of them barely able to even achieve penetration itself before suddenly being whisked out the door again. It's the concept of this woman being put into such a submissive position that is the real turn-on for people who like this kind of stuff; it's not the minimalist sex itself that's erotically satisfying, but what it says about humanity that the video even exists in the first place.

Palahniuk's book, then, takes a look at five different characters all involved with one such commercial gangbang video shoot: the aging porn veteran in the middle of it all (think a down-on-her-luck Ginger Lynn); her young radical-feminist alt-dot-sex assistant, also the production manager of the shoot itself; a famous fellow-aging pretty-boy male porn star who will be the 600th and last lay of the event, known for his enormous schlong and rapidly crumbling looks (very obviously a thinly-veiled Peter North); an obsessed teenager who has basically allowed his adopted parents to kick him out of their house in order to attend; and most bizarrely of all, a gay closeted Hollywood actor who was once a popular television cop, until it came out that he himself had been the subject of a gay gangbang video when younger, who is now at this straight video shoot in an attempt to get "outed" as a heterosexual TMZ-syle and jump-start his mainstream career again. Because oh, did I not mention this? *Everyone's under the impression that the porn star is going to die during the shoot*, originally because of a bizarre medical phenomenon that the producers randomly hear

about one day, the very real but rare vaginal embolism that can sometimes occur when a woman has something unusual put inside her, or too many things put inside her too quickly. (Go read about it if you want to know why such a thing actually kills a few hundred women a year in real life; it's too gross to get into here.)

The people behind the shoot start playing this detail up, hoping that it'll drum up more publicity; but the more everyone starts thinking about it, the more they realize just what a goldmine it would be for everyone involved if the woman *does* actually die during the shoot, not only for all the copies that would eventually be bought online through shady international servers and the like, but also because it would undoubtedly outrage the American public, probably leading to Congress banning the shooting of such videos, making that shoot legally the last gangbang literally in the history of porn. (And besides, what apocalypse-embracing monster *doesn't* want to go around being able to say, "I own the c-ck that literally killed a porn star?") With dollar signs flashing in all their eyeballs, then, the various hucksters and crazies involved with the shoot start making nefarious plans to make sure all ends as expected; one sneaks a poison capsule into the event, another starts planning a series of spectacularly violent events to end it all.

Yeah, *ready to slit your wrists out of sheer depression yet?* No? Well, how about if we add the fact that the teenage boy might or might not be the porn star's illegitimate child, given up for adoption at birth? And that he knows this and has obsessively decided to attend the shoot as a performer anyway? Or that part of this novel consists of watching the closeted Hollywood actor slowly overdose on Viagra over the course of 200 pages, with physical results that are painful to even read about? Or that one of the people making secret plans for the porn star's death is the porn star herself, obsessed as she is with celebrity suicide and how history will perceive her? *Now* are you ready to kill yourself? Because let's make no mistake -- in true Palahniukian style, this novel is about as bleak as a bleak tale gets, a look at a cold and remorseless universe where such concepts as love and intimacy don't even exist. In the world of *Snuff*, there is no such thing as pleasant sex; all of it is tinged with the disgusting mix of baby oil and male sweat and the dust of Cheetos from the craft-services table a few minutes before, the smells coming from the single toilet all 600 men are forced to share, the blood and saliva of the horned-up almost naked former prisoners getting into nervy fistfights with each other in the green room before their numbers are finally called.

Ugh -- it makes me shudder just recounting the details to you! And that's an important thing for you to understand, a thing I don't think I can emphasize enough; that if even I -- even a guy who when younger used to be an edgy sex columnist himself, even a guy who was already familiar with the details of apocalypse porn before picking up this book -- if even I am creeped out and disgusted by *Snuff*, for all you normal folks there is a very real chance of...

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## Owen says

So far it's not the sex that's making me queasy and itchy as much as the gleefully elaborate descriptions of all the various stains, smears, smudges, dribbles, crumbs and residues that the characters in this book seem to leave on every surface that they come into contact with. Chuck is smart enough to realize that he probably isn't going to shock any of his loyal readers (or anyone who has ever watched a porno) with endless mechanical details, so instead he concentrates on making everything so damn *grimy* that the psychological discomfort comes from the notion that people really are this filthy and they're out there right now *touching* everything! In addition to putting you off sex and flavored potato chips, this book has the power to turn anyone into a germophobe.

Now that I finished it I can only add that it ends up feeling more like a long short-story than a full-blown (snicker) novel, and the big twist ending was barely worth the trip. The brown ink did help reinforce the overall ookyness of the experience for me though. The only way it could have been worse was if every copy

of the book shipped with greasy cheez-powder fingerprints on every other page, but I guess that just wasn't practical.

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## Yulia says

Please stop writing, Mr. Palahniuk.

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## Roberto says

### Il troppo... stroppia

Chuck Palahniuk è uno scrittore che riesce sempre, in qualche modo, a stupire. Di questo "Gang bang" mi aveva colpito la storia, decisamente stramba e non convenzionale, letta sulla quarta di copertina.

Una porn-star, alla fine della sua "carriera", decide di battere il record di "gang bang" (in italiano ammucchiata), ossia di far sesso davanti alle telecamere con 600 (!!) uomini in una sola giornata. A tutto questo esercito di uomini, in attesa in uno spogliatoio puzzolente e in continua caccia di pillole blu, viene marchiato sul braccio col pennarello indelebile un numero progressivo (mi domando se in questo caso non sia il caso di parlare di uomo-oggetto, addirittura catalogato con un numero).

Il romanzo consiste nei dialoghi tra il n. 72, che è convinto di essere il figlio della donna, il n. 137, un divo della tv caduto in disgrazia e il n. 600, ex pornoattore di fama mondiale e compagno della pornoattrice in innumerevoli pellicole.

A completare la scena c'è la segretaria che coordina i vari interventi sul set, personaggio tutt'altro che marginale.

Certo non è un libro per educande, ma l'obiettivo non vuole essere il sesso, descritto come pura macelleria. L'attenzione è concentrata sulle ambizioni, le ossessioni e le paure dei vari protagonisti; il set diventa una metafora del nostro mondo violento, perverso, costituito da arrivisti che badano solo ad apparire, attenti solamente al successo ed al denaro e dove è sufficiente un errore per compromettere tutto quanto fatto di buono in precedenza.

*"Non importa quanto lavori duro, o quanto diventi in gamba. Sarai sempre e soltanto ricordato per quell'unica scelta sbagliata"*

Bello quindi? No, direi proprio di no. Assolutamente no. Il libro è per me confuso, ci sono ripetizioni, gira spesso a vuoto e la metafora è debole. Il finale è poi grottesco all'ennesima potenza, tanto da diventare pietoso. E' troppo.... troppo tutto! Non mi turba che parli di sesso (macelleria, in effetti, più che sesso), mi disturba aver perso del tempo con una lettura inutile.

Decisamente sottotono rispetto alle possibilità di questo autore.

Le uniche cose che ho trovato divertenti sono i titoli dei film porno citati, vere e proprie prese in giro di titoli della storia del cinema.

Una curiosità: pensavo che la situazione descritta nel libro fosse una iperbole. Ho scoperto, googolando, che

tal Lisa Sparxxx nel 2004 ha fatto il gangbang-record facendo sesso in un giorno con 919 (novecentodiciannove!) uomini. Una inguaribile romanticona...

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### **Kemper says**

As a Chuck Palahniuk fan, I was disappointed. It's got all the usual elements of a Chuck P. novel. Dark humor, gross material, oddball characters, and plenty of plot twists, but it's a let down after the superior *Haunted* and *Rant*.

It's very short. In fact, a shorter version might have made a great story in *Haunted*. And after the mind bending sci-fi of *Rant*, it seems like a far less ambitious novel. It's not bad, but it reads like something that Palahniuk did as a side project while working on something bigger and better.

Save your money and get it from the library or wait for the paperback. Fans of Chuck will find it worth reading, but it's not worth the full hardback price at less than 200 pages.

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### **Kelly (and the Book Boar) says**

Find all of my reviews at: <http://52bookminimum.blogspot.com/>

***“Six hundred dudes. One porn queen. A world record for the ages. A must-have movie for every discerning collector of things erotic. Didn't one of us on purpose set out to make a snuff movie.”***

You're probably reading a Chuck Palahniuk sex story.

The premise of *Snuff* is simple enough – a world record is about to be broken. This is the story of a day in the life of 600 dudes, including an aging porn star . . .

a boy with a secret . . .

and a bunch of other randos . . .

Each of these shank-shuckers/baby-barfers/tadpole-tossers or whatever you want to call them anxiously awaits their turn at a bang session with the queen of the adult film scene, Cassie Wright. While waiting in the wings the jizz-juicers/sock-soakers/bone-beaters or whatever you want to call them will kill time popping little blue pills, watching some classic films for inspiration such as *Sperms of Endearment*, *Angels with Dirty Places*, *Lay Misty for Me* and the ever-popular *The Handmaid's Tale* . . .

It's okay Kanye. That was funny – and the public flogging you'll receive by the members of Goodreads for laughing at that will only hurt until the bruises fade. The ceiling-spacklers/weasel-teasers/willy-wankers or whatever you want to call them will also let some skeletons come tumbling out of their respective closets . . .

No, I mean big secrets . . .

Okay, **HUGE** secrets . . .

which all leads up to a patented Palahniuk ending.

My sincerest apologies, Chuck, but you really . . .

with this one. It almost makes me want to go raise my rating for *Beautiful You*. Almost. If you have nothing better to do and want to say you read something by Palahniuk since he's soooooo edgy, don't let this review stop you. Don't say I didn't warn you, though. Oh, and if you think I read everything wrong (and spend all day talking about how I'm related to Lucifer and/or trolling), go read Kemper or Ed or Bill's reviews instead since they all found it to be equally as "meh" as I did.

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## Laura says

I absolutely enjoyed this book. I just came off of reading "Rant" with my Composition 2 students, and I had one student object (quietly, coming to me during office hours to do so) to reading it because it goes against everything she believes in (which is following the word of God and ridding the world of moral filth. Her words, not mine). So of course I respected her position, gave her a new assignment, and kept on trucking with the rest of the class. Her comments did, however, give me pause as I opened up this new Palahniuk delight about an aging pornography queen set to beat the world record for sex acts taped for a movie (600 men/600 sex acts). Was it too "filthy," and should I approach it with a keener eye for any use of filth-for-filth's-sake? And my response was: hell no.

It was great. Yes, it was totally off its literary rocker, and yes, it was over-the-top sexually graphic. But was it perfect? Very nearly, yes. Given the title and a very early tip from one of our narrators (Palahniuk's at his stylistic wheel of fortune again, this time giving us first person narration from four different characters' p.o.v.'s) I knew that the film Cassie Wright, our porn queen, was making would eventually turn out as a snuff film. Though what kind of guess, I wasn't even close. I guessed one of the twists about half-way through (won't spoil it here), though the other handful hit me like one of Branch Bacardi's toys over the head.

In addition to its super-fun story and really nice, tight writing, it's an ultra quick read. I started it Saturday

afternoon and finished it last night (I would have finished it quicker, but we had a Power Family Field Trip to a soccer game at Soldier Field last evening). I stayed up until about one a.m. to finish it, and was thoroughly pleased that I did. Pick it up, be totally aware of the subject matter and don't be shocked to read about sex acts, sex toys, and sex performers in graphic-traffic detail. And then, just have a fantastic time.

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## Jacob says

March 2013

Tired and unimaginative and uninspired and dull...just like everything else Chucky P. has written. And grog forgive me, I read it twice.

There's a reason for that. Ok, two. One is, I keep reading good books, and all those four- and five-star reads have me worried that something might be wrong, that my judgement is off, so I decided to read something bad to compensate. Nope, nothing wrong here. This book is bad and all the others I read so far this year were pretty good. Nothing to worry about. Thanks, Chuck!

Two is, something about this book has been bothering me since the first time I read it, years ago. Something one of the narrators said, a thought he had, something apparently so important that Chuck had to say it twice. Ladies and gentlemen, dick-lit fans, behold your king:

The closest thing that comes to how the day felt is when you wipe back to front. You're on the toilet. You're not thinking, and you smear shit on the back of your hanging-down wrinkled ball skin. The more you try to wipe it clean, the skin stretches and the mess keeps getting bigger. The thin layer of shit spreads into the hair and down your thighs. That's how a day like this, how it feels to keep secret.  
(*Snuff*, page 4...AND page 187)

And what I want to know is, *WHO THE FUCK WIPES BACK TO FRONT?*

I mean, aside from Chucky P., apparently.

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## Kelly B says

This is the second worst book I have ever read. I don't know if I can say I've even read it because I just cannot bring myself to finish it. This guy has no concept on how to write a good sentence. Not one good sentence. Pick a page, then put your finger on a word. It will all be stupid and bad. A friend of mine paid \$30 to take me to hear him speak, and this is how I wound up with a signed copy of this book. Everybody in his cult following crowd was young and ultra hip, and obviously has really bad taste in writing. If that is our future it's gonna be bleak. The story he read at that lecture was a short story about someone at a game show on acid, and normally I love acid stories, but eww. It was totally obvious and predictable and dull. Horribly dull. Not at all creative or insightful. I don't know how he sells books. His stories are based on shock which can only be shocking to the most plain unread reader. It's overdone to the point you can't even call it that. He tries to go so far in shock it comes off as totally unbelievable but not far, or interesting enough, to be any type of fun exaggerated fantasy. And I think he got all his research off the internet. If he was a baddass he would have made a porno. Or at least watched one. It feels like he just randomly threw facts in to sound credible. It was so painful to read. Physically painful too, not only brain aneurysm painful. My face hurt from screwing it up grossing out at the bad writing. The only redeeming thing I got from his crappy

unintelligent lecture and this stupid book (and I like porn) is that if he can do it so can I. Or maybe not, cuz if this is what society is digging the tastes and intelligence of America is so dumbed down they may forget what good taste is and we will soon be the way of that Idiocracy movie. When someone asked him who his influences were he couldn't even quote any good writers. He quoted The Hardy Boys or something similar but not as good. What? I'm not dogging The Hardy Boys, but that was really all he could come up with. He needs to never have a book published ever again. I guess I should say I never read any of his other books so I don't have anything to compare this to, mostly because I hated the movie "Fight Club," yeah I said it, and that's a shitty way to judge whether or not you're going to read the book but I just had a feeling, you know, I get those on books. And this being my introduction to his writing does not make me want to waste any time picking up any other book of his.

Oh yeah, and he used the word "dude" a lot. Annoyingly so. And not in dialogue. Ugg. He sucks.

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### **Maggie says**

I refuse to spend more time reviewing this book than Palahniuk spent writing it (which couldn't have been very much), so I'll be brief. Snuff takes place entirely in the green room of a porno movie. Cassie Wright is an aging porn star who is trying to set a world record for having sex with 600 dudes in one film, an act that everyone seems to think will kill her. Cassie thinks this too, but that appears to be the whole point. She's hoping that if she dies trying to break the record, then the film will go gangbusters and make a ton of money, money which she will then leave to the child she abandoned eighteen years prior. A whole mess of creepy men answer the casting call to help Cassie make history, and the story is told from the point-of-view of three of those dudes: Mr. 600, a professional porn star and the man who got Cassie started in the business; Mr. 137, a washed-up television star who somehow thinks doing this will resuscitate his failing career; and Mr. 72, who - as messed up as this sounds - believes he is Cassie's son. And if this all sounds like a great big ol' wet, hot mess, then that's because it is.

I'm honestly not really sure what Palahniuk was trying to accomplish with this book. If I were feeling kind, I'd suggest that Snuff was a failed attempt at making some sort of larger critical commentary on the porn industry; however, I'm not feeling kind, so instead I'll suggest that Snuff is the product of a shocking author who has run out of ways to try and shock us. Trouble is, despite the subject matter, it's not particularly shocking at all. Instead, it's lazily written, pointless and boring.

In short, I absolutely hated this book. If it had a face, I would have punched it in it.

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### **Jason Koivu says**

I feel icky.

Chuck Palahniuk's take on the porn industry blows wades of sex euphemisms all over the reader like moneyshots at a gangbang. The language is as base as the subject matter. The characters have all the nuance of a cookie cutter. The plot, slightly more complicated than the old school "I've come to fix the pool" porn of yesteryear, is nonetheless as formulaic as a whodunit mystery. And yes, all this works in the author's favor. He is, after all, writing about porn.

Is this titillation pure and simple, or is this an important truth? To me, it seems filled to the brim with both. Like moths to light, certain kinds of people seem drawn to join the porn industry. In evening news programs like 60 Minutes they've often been depicted as having preexisting "damaged" traits. Palahniuk plays this up to the hilt and then takes it a step further, going into the Hollywood world for examples of actors and actresses drawn to the flame of stardom, some on the cusp of making it only to fall into the necessity of making ends meet. But Palahniuk casts about too far in piling on the shocking examples of movie industry mishaps, which drift so far from the point as to nearly devolve into the sort of sensationalistic headlines found on the cover of gossip mags in the counter aisle.

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### Matthieu says

Read in an attempt to *understand*. Wasn't successful.

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### Diana Gangan says

Don't watch porn. Read Palahniuk. It's filthier, you'll see. Filthier but brilliant. True fact.

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### Edward Lorn says

I'm not gonna beat around the bush. *Snuff* is as enjoyable as a wet fart in a hot shower. This is also the book that started Palahniuk's dive into mediocrity and self parody. *Pygmy* is the deepest depth to which Chuck sank before grabbing the life preserver that was *Damned*, at least in my opinion. I know people still think he hasn't written a good book since *Diary*, but I thought his romp in Hell was big fun.

This is my second time reading this one, and I only gave it another chance because a) I had a spare Audible code, b) it was short, coming in at just under 5 hours, and c) I figured maybe the book would be better if I listened to it. Hey! It's happened before, I swear!

The premise is simple. Instead of the Houston 500 (the real-life super orgy wherein 500 dudes all try and hump a porn queen name Houston), you have 600 rock-hard chaps snackin' and slappin' and plottin' to be a part of Cassie Wright's final spacklin' party. During this time, we're led to believe that Cassie might be related to one of her bones-at-the-throne. And that's about it. There's the signature Palahniuk twist and shocking ending, only this one is more befitting an episode of *Columbo* than it is a novel from the writer of such mind-blowingly original shit as *Invisible Monsters* and *Choke*.

*Snuff* reads as if Chuck Palahniuk simply wanted to see how many faux-adult-film parodies he could title before the end of the book. Not a single movie reference was funny. In fact, most of Palahniuk's witty humor is missing in action. I think I laughed once, and that was because I couldn't believe how it ended. Not because I was shocked but because I couldn't believe that *THAT* was supposed to be the twist. Kinda like opening a Mystery-Flavored Airhead and finding the word PINEAPPLE stamped across a strip of white taffy.

In summation: Sadly, this is only the first in a series of total letdowns from one of my favorite authors. I don't talk about Chuck Palahniuk enough, but the guy's one of my literary heroes. It always hurts when I hate

something from him, as it does when Stephen King lets me down. My advice is to stay away from *Snuff*. There really is nothing noteworthy going on here. Just an author lurching through the motions and stumbling over his own feet.

### **Final Judgment: A Ron Jeremy product placement.**

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### **Mike Kleine says**

Snuff is not for everybody. Those who have never read a Chuck Palahniuk novel will probably not enjoy the story or the way it is presented while others may be drawn to the subject matter alone. "Six hundred dudes. One porn queen. A world record for the ages." Come on, it's about porn! Palahniuk fans will certainly enjoy this short tirade that seems more like a novella than an actual novel. Snuff is Chuck's shortest novel to date. Fact. Every single letter is in brown ink! Fact. It certainly does not take away from the aesthetic feel but it may come as a surprise to some when they first begin reading though it is not immediately noticeable.

Overall, Snuff is not a bad story at all, Chuck has just put himself in a bad spot with his previous novels. He has raised the bar to such great heights with novels such as *Fight Club*, *Haunted*, and *Survivor* that fans may see Snuff more as something of a writing exercise, rather than a true piece of accomplished work. Opting for a multi-character narrative, the storytelling is different from his other books. There is very little dark humor, instead, the humor in Snuff is much more apparent; not that it's a bad thing, just a little different than usual. It wouldn't be fair to completely bad mouth this book. It certainly does have its golden moments. Each character definitely breathes and acts Palahniuk but everything just seems a bit toned down. For a book about pornography, it seems pretty tame. It still does have its gross-out moments but about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the novel is spent inside the green room. The entire experience does seem to have a life of its own and the descriptions are nicely depicted, making it easy for readers to picture the room.

There is a great deal of suspense during each narrative and though the chapter titles claim that a different character is narrating, it doesn't always feel unique to the specific character. Sure, one may repeatedly use the word "dude" and another may repeatedly be carrying a stuffed animal but thought-process-wise, they all think alike. Every single character in the book seems to be a walking trivia machine and though that may be synonymous to Palahniuk's style, it just detracts from the authenticity of the story. The shortness of Snuff also seems to alienate us from any of the four main characters. Though we do spend a lot of time in the green room with each character, it just doesn't last long enough for us to feel attached to any of them.

There are a few plot twists but they are all mildly predictable. Anyone who has seen a soap opera in the past month or watched an episode of *Family Matters* will know what to expect on the next page. The ending is a bit unexpected and true to Palahniuk's signature style but it also feels a little far-fetched. Then again, this is only a book and not real life. Some stuff needs to be far from the truth; nobody wants to read about the mundane reality of life. Palahniuk claims to have already completed the first draft for his next novel *Pygmy* so Snuff can arguably be passed off as something to tide us over for the wait. Though it is short, somewhat predictable at spots, and a bit tame for what it is depicting; it is full of humor, wonderful trivia, plot twists, and memorable quotes. This book may not win any awards but it certainly will be mentioned in the years to come and you will be glad to have read it.

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