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John Lydon book discussion and signing at the Strand Book Store

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Last night, punk legend **John Lydon** spoke about his second memoir — **“Anger Is an Energy: My Life Uncensored”** — to a capacity crowd in the Rare Book Room at the Strand in Greenwich Village. The 544-page tome was released in the U.S. this past Tuesday, and covers his life from childhood through the present.



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Leslie Feffer

Although the former **Sex Pistols** singer, who used to be known as Johnny Rotten, began his talk nearly an hour after the scheduled start, the more than 200 fans at the sold-out event enjoyed his wide-ranging talk on subjects such as how his childhood bout with meningitis affected his memory to his broad tastes in books (“Anything written by Winston Churchill I always found fascinating”) to his interest in marine biology, while occasionally drinking from a bottle of brandy.

Lydon also spoke affectionately of his wife of more than 30 years, Nora, to whom he devoted two chapters of the book. “She’s the love of my life. She deserves it and frankly, that’s not enough. Who else would put up with me?” he said.

During the 35-minute program, the **Public Image Ltd** founder also talked about how some of the Sex Pistols’ songs attacked British institutions, mostly famously the Queen of England. “It was discussed openly in Parliament, under the Traitors and Treason Act. This was for ‘God Save The Queen’ and ‘Anarchy [In The U.K.]’ That charge carried a death penalty. So you (expletive) tell me who’s king of the punks,” **he said**, deadpanning the last sentence. “The point is, I wanted that to happen. I wanted to challenge the law, to question are we really democratic? And they had to say yes and agree that I had every right to say what I say. That was a worthy challenge. And that’s how you beat institutions. You use their own weapons against them. You do not need guns and bullets to do it.”

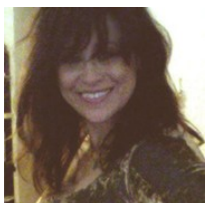
The singer spoke about his lifelong love of reading and writing, which began when his mother taught him those skills when he was 4 years old. “I was fascinated by the shapes of letters,” he said.

Although this memoir is an extensive account of his life, Lydon assured the assembled fans that there is much more to come: “The story’s not ended yet. It can’t — not until the day I die, and hopefully that’s an awful long time away. I’m closer to 60 than anything else, and that’s (expletive) great. (Expletive) off, Mr. [Pete] Townshend, a good friend of mine. I don’t hope I die before I get old. I want to get old, and I want that a lot! I want every single second that is available for my body to exist. This is all I know, life.”

The publisher has made an excerpt from the book available online [here](#).

SUGGESTED LINKS

- **Scott Ian book talk and signing at Strand Books**
- **Richard Hell book reading and talk at Strand Bookstore**
- **Lynn Goldsmith photography exhibit opens at Morrison Hotel Gallery today**
- **Chris Stein photography exhibition opens**
- **NYC classic rock locations: Cafe Wha?**



Leslie Feffer

New York Classic Rock Music Examiner