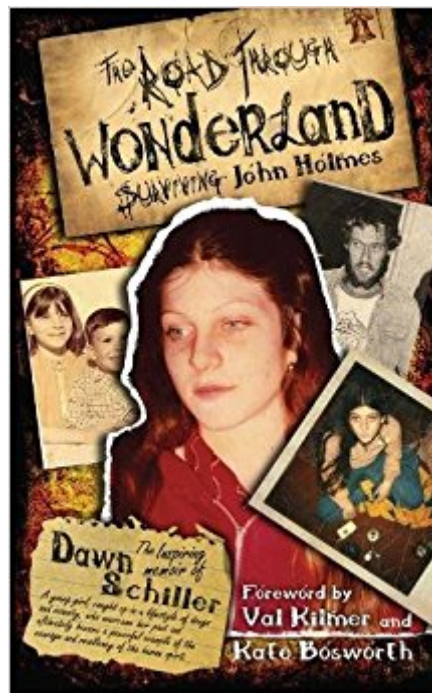




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# The Road Through Wonderland: Surviving John Holmes (5 Year Anniversary)



## Synopsis

Painstakingly honest, this chilling memoir reveals how a teenager became immersed in the bizarre life of legendary porn star John Holmes. Starting with a childhood that molded her perfectly to fall for the seduction of "the king of porn," this autobiography recounts the perilous road that Dawn Schiller traveled—from drugs and addiction to beatings, arrests, forced prostitution, and being sold to the drug underworld. After living through the horrific Wonderland murders of 1981, she entered protective custody, ran from the FBI, and turned in John Holmes to the police. This is the true story of a young girl's harrowing escape from one of the most infamous public figures, her struggle to survive, and her recovery from unthinkable abuse.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The 2003 movie *Wonderland* vivified Schiller's teenage experience under the thrall of a drug-addled porn star in L.A. in the late 1970s, while this long docudrama expands on that raw era to include her peripatetic, dysfunctional upbringing and aftermath as a survivor. The daughter of a Vietnam vet and a German woman he met and married overseas, Schiller spent her early years moving around to accommodate her father's military career, especially between New Jersey and the suburbs of Miami. After a free-wheeling road trip, the family ended up in Glendale, Calif., where Schiller met John Holmes, the charismatic 32-year-old married manager of an apartment complex they happened to crash in. Holmes clearly took on a fatherly role to young Schiller, whose own father left her to her own devices, including feeding herself. She was 15, and he had a thriving secret career

as a porn star. She eventually moved in with Holmes and his sympathetic wife, Sharon, though drugs soon changed the dynamic to erratic behavior: Holmes beat and prostituted Schiller before she fled, and he became entangled in the so-called Wonderland murders of 1981. This is the grim, interminable plight of a "throwaway" teen with nowhere else to go, a cautionary tale in workmanlike prose. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Curiously enough for a book concerned with notorious pornographic film star John Holmes, there is very little emphasis on sex here. Instead, Schiller, who met Holmes in 1976 when she was just 15, details their five-year love affair, the stability he provided in the wake of her troubled childhood, and the deterioration of their relationship after Holmes became addicted to cocaine and was ultimately arrested. While in the grip of drug-fueled paranoia, he would beat her while also forcing her to prostitute herself for money to feed his habit. Her vulnerability is revealed by the fact that she spends as much time describing the way he casually destroyed her beloved Christmas gifts as she does the degradations he forced her to undergo. The most fascinating person in the book is Holmes' wife, Sharon, a dedicated nurse who claims she was ignorant of Holmes and Schiller's relationship; indeed, she became more of a mother to Dawn than her own mother ever was. Dawn's story is so volatile and dysfunctional that even her labored prose can't mask the drama of lives spinning out of control. --Joanne Wilkinson

To read what she went through for so long was hard for me to read. I'm so glad she got out before death. There are too many times the ones being abused don't get it alive. It also goes to show that when it comes to celebrities, people just can't say no. That in itself is sad. It also shows how drug abuse and addictions can really change a person without their knowledge. Once you get to a certain point, it only matters that you get your fix. You don't really notice how you are hurting, using and plain out and out doing and living wrong. I'm sad that he couldn't get clean and learn to be the person he had been before the drugs. I wish people that gave addictions and are scared of what will happen if they take that path if themselves away, that they will truly be happier and it's only real hard work for such a short time. Thanks for sharing your story with me and living through those dark memories, but I know it will help someone. It's amazing how someone else making it through something like Dawn did and proving that it IS possible to get away from it. Even though you've been told no one cares about, there really are people that truly do.

I practically flew through this book because I could not put it down. And immediately after reading the last page I was feeling so many different emotions. The descriptions toward the end of dawn seeing John at the bus stop was literally frightening to me because as soon as I finished the book I was actually scared..like there was a ghost in the room with me.. I thought it was very well written and the sequence of events makes it easy to totally understand what is going on. And as for people who get upset over the fact that a 15 year old girl was with a 30 something year old...well that's not very uncommon and also if you read the entire book you would know that in the beginning she looked to John as somewhat of a father figure to her and her sister and then he fell in love with her and in return, she with him. Her life was very complicated for a long time and in bad situations it is always easy to fall for someone who's intentions may not be as pure as they seem. But I honestly feel that John did really love her, he just let drugs get the better of him and wasn't able to handle his feelings for her. Oh and also the statute of limitations wouldn't even apply here since John Holmes died back in the 80's! If you'd read the whole book you'd know that...but anyway...overall I give this book 5 stars, definitely, because well it's just a great book and I had wanted to read this book for so long so I'm very happy I finally got around to doing so :-)

"The Road Through Wonderland," largely chronicles the years of the book's author, Dawn Schiller, that she spent as the girlfriend of porn legend John Holmes. There are some who would characterize Holmes as a waste of a human life simply because he was an adult performer. However, the reader is able to somewhat warm up to Holmes, in the beginning at least, as Schiller shows how kind and generous Holmes was. Schiller also writes about how Holmes did not enjoy his work in porn and only did it for the paycheck. The kindly version of Holmes is short-lived as Schiller describes the porn star's trip into the abyss as he gets wrapped up in drugs, namely freebasing cocaine and turns into a monster. As Dawn's life with Holmes becomes a living hell, the reader grows to dislike the man more and more. Schiller's writing is matter-of-fact, very readable, and polished. Having said that, the book is depressing and the tone is one of hopelessness. The reader can see how bad Holmes is for Schiller's well-being and how much Schiller would like to be happy again. Only, like many battered women before her, Schiller thinks things will eventually get better. Telling the reader the outcome of the book would spoil the ride and what a journey through hell it is. Let it suffice to say that Schiller makes it out on the other side and I would be interested in reading anything else she writes.

Such an amazing Human! What this girl went through and where she is at today is simply

breathhtaking!! I like that it read like a novel vs a bio. Sometimes I had to remind myself that this actually happened and that it happens all the time. I was so consumed that I was googling information in regards to this whole book. I will now watch the movie, I know that they are never as accurate as the book especially one wrote by the person who lived this hell but I do know that she was involved in the making.

Brutal honesty and strength are terms that immediately come to mind about this remarkable woman and the story told in her book. I cannot begin to imagine the fortitude of character that one must possess in order to make it through not only a horribly troubled childhood, but then an insanely abusive adolescence and ultimately early adulthood. As a reader, we feel her fear and heartache, but we also see that she is a woman who has a will to survive and a fighting force to live: There is hope. This book shows that despite circumstances that are beyond inhumane, that the human spirit (often with the help of a 4 legged friend) can survive. Dawn is a role model, and a survivor whom we should revere. Lastly, her writing style is also truly beautiful. Bravo, Dawn, for being so brave.

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