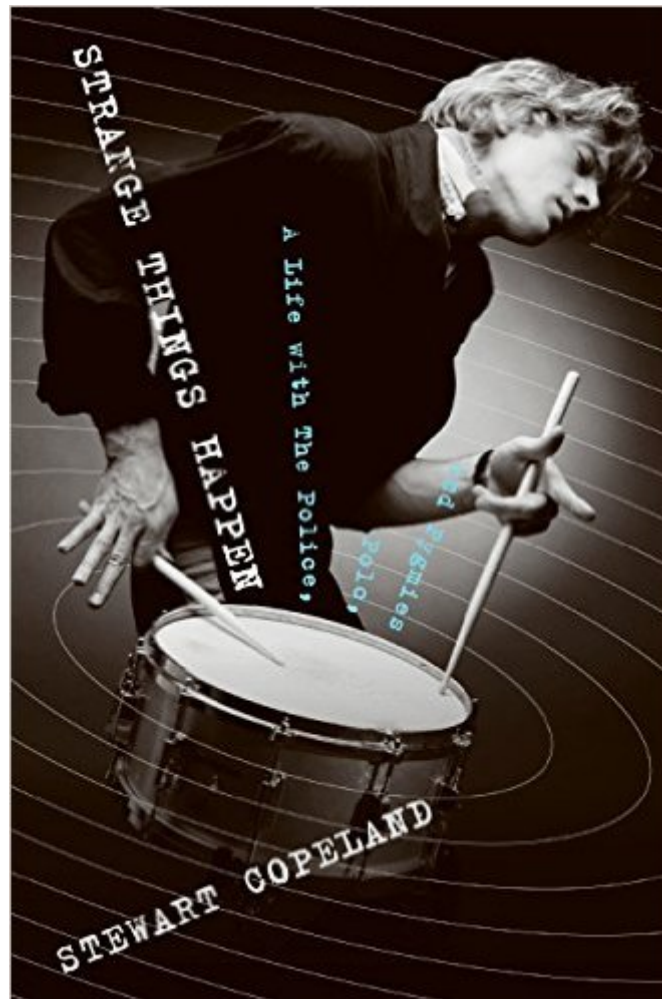


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Strange Things Happen: A Life With The Police, Polo, And Pygmies



Synopsis

• "An excellent read." • "St. Petersburg Times" • "An often hilarious, always candid and astutely observed memoir chronicling a life observed, largely, from the vantage point of a drum throne." • "Buffalo News" Rock legend Stewart Copeland, drummer for seminal pop trio The Police, shares his stories from before, during, and after his days with Sting and Andy Summers, in one of the most popular and influential bands of the eighties. Strange Things Happen indeed.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Stewart Copeland's first foray into publishing, "Strange Things Happen: A Life with The Police, Polo, and Pygmies," is in itself wonderful and strange. In addition to his storied career as drummer for 1980s juggernaut The Police, Copeland has a slew of other abilities: film composer, videographer, musical-instrument-inventor. Luckily for the reader one of Copeland's additional talents is a flair for hilarious, insightful prose. It seems unlikely that a person known for generating a theatrical hail of thunder on stage would generate this, one of the rarest of items in the rock world: a memoir nearly devoid of pretense or self-deception. Yet the book is 300+ pages of exuberant recollection, without the abundance of twisted rationalization so common in the rock genre. Copeland on music, pg. 18: "I am nothing, no one. Just the beating heart of a larger body, enveloped by the soul of the faithful. A synapse closes in the mind of the enraptured protoshaman. Next morning, when my head clears, it seems obvious that music isn't just a tool or weapon, it's what my life is for. It's powerful juju, and I want to own it as much as it owns me." Some of the tales here will be familiar to readers of

Copeland's official website, on which he's maintained a trove of first person essays for the past couple of years, the felicitously-titled "Dinner Tales." However, only a couple of the chapters are pulled word-for-word from the website - and, as a plus for Copeland-philes of recent vintage, there's an entire new chapter concerning a green-flag project conducted during the 2007-2008 Police tour by the denizens of the website itself.

I feel a little bit like pulling a Jedi Mind Trick here to start off this review. Or that perhaps Stewart Copeland has pulled one over on all of us readers, or that he should do before the angry shouts and rampant confusion surely begins. Police fans looking for, at long last, Stewart's definitive statement on The Police? *handwave* "This is not the book you are looking for." As far as I see it, Stewart made his definitive statement on the early Police years with *Everyone Stares: The Police Inside Out*. If you're expecting much more here, you'll be disappointed, although there are a few brilliant gems of observation that slip through the cracks when and where you least expect it. Diehard Stewart fans--the self-proclaimed Nutters and Snarks--looking for deep personal insight and a detailed history of Stewart's life and all his various projects? *handwave* "This is not the book you are looking for." Stewart Copeland is not here to divulge all his secrets, nor dish the dirt on his past relationships, musical or personal. If you're looking for either type of information, you'll be highly disappointed (go read band mate Andy Summers' book "One Train Later" instead). What Stewart is here to do is share some stories with us, and most of these stories are quite lighthearted and fun in their nature and tone. They're the kind of stories you'd share at a dinner party to good friends, people who will get all the in-jokes and references you'll be making. It's no wonder that when Stewart first shared some of these stories on his website, it was in a section of the site entitled "Stewart's Dinner Tales". But if you're looking for a traditional autobiography?

In *STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN*, Stewart Copeland summed up his original experience as drummer for one of the greatest bands of all time as follows: "The Police took up only eight of my fifty-seven years, and those years went by fast. They were big years, and they left a mark, but the really important things happened outside of band life." That, incidentally, is about as much time as he devotes in his book to the time in which he contributed to making some of the best music ever recorded. People expecting a tell-all book about his time with The Police during their original incarnation are therefore warned that this is not a memoir about his time with that band, but the story of Copeland's life with "those eight big years" almost completely omitted. It is, I have to say, an interesting life. A truncated list of the experiences recounted in this book include growing up in

Lebanon as the son of a CIA agent, palling around with the son of notorious British traitor Kim Philby, learning how to play the drums, early life as an amp-hustling roadie, shooting a movie in the Congo, playing polo against the Prince of Wales (you know, Charles), playing gigs with Oysterhead, Phish, the Foo Fighters and Incubus, making soundtracks for films (like "The Outsiders") and television shows (like "The Equalizer"), making solo music with Klark Kent, touring with Curved Air, performing La Notte della Taranta (a dance festival) all over Italy, writing and conducting opera, and making EVERYONE STARES, an award-winning documentary about his days in the Police, which he shot on 8mm during the lifetime of the band, and later edited into a documentary. In the average month, Mr. Copeland seems to experience more "strange things" than most people would in a 100-year lifetime.

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