



I, Fatty: A Novel

Jerry Stahl

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The strange, compelling, and occasionally hysterical story of Hollywood's first celebrity scandal-as told by Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle, the star at its center.

Abandoned as a boy in Kansas, Fatty Arbuckle found adulation first onstage, and then in the new medium of the cinema. In his day, during the second decade of the 1900s, Fatty was more popular than Chaplin; he became the first screen actor to make a million dollars a year. But in 1921 he was accused of the rape and murder of actress Virginia Rappe, whom he encountered at a party in San Francisco and who died a few days later. Though he was eventually acquitted by a unanimous jury, the virulent speculation by the press ultimately destroyed Arbuckle's career for good. Framed for a crime he didn't commit, and demonized by conservative powers that hyped the case as emblematic of all the evils of show business, Fatty Arbuckle was the O.J. Simpson of early Hollywood, the first modern celebrity whose presumed guilt - and alleged innocence - galvanized a nation.

In *I, Fatty*, Jerry Stahl, the celebrated author of *Permanent Midnight*, tells the story from Fatty's own perspective. This is an incisive and sympathetic look into the life of a man whose astonishing rise and fall set the precedent for the scandals that still shake Hollywood today.

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