



# Scandalous!: 50 Shocking Events You Should Know About (So You Can Impress Your Friends)

By Hallie Fryd

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Do you love a good scandal? This book includes 50 juicy pop culture, political, and entertainment-related scandals complete with photos, event synopses, and a look at why it went down in history and how it continues to influence us today. Other features include famous quotes and a section on where the players are now. Teens will get the dish on:

- Milli Vanilli's lip-syncing
- the Clinton-Lewinsky affair
- the Biggie and Tupac murders
- the Kent State shooting
- the OJ Simpson Murder trial
- Patty Hearst's kidnapping
- And more!

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

“A gleefully explicit catalogue of the past century’s headline-grabbing bad behavior...Catnip for scandal junkies, with a bit of historical perspective stirred in.” — *Kirkus Reviews*

“Fryd uses a snappy format to introduce 50 newsworthy (and occasionally cringe-worthy) dramas that caught the public’s attention. Informative!” — *ALA Booklist*

#### About the Author

Hallie Fryd is a writer living in Oakland, California. She studied history at Carnegie Mellon University and writes about politics and pop culture for her blog *Pysched and Such*. This is her first book.

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Everyone loves a good scandal. Why? Because scandals are exciting, juicy stories with lots of twists and turns. They involve dramatic trials and fallen celebrities, misguided scientists and game-changing athletes, superstar lawyers, hardened criminals, and all kinds of secrets and lies. Plus, they make great conversation at parties. But when you really break it down, scandals are also an important part of history. Something is considered "scandalous" because it's wrong or immoral in our eyes. The things we find shocking can tell us a lot about ourselves and our society.

Scandals are cornerstones, too, in a society's evolution. For instance, Elvis' scandalous hip-shaking on TV set the stage for rock stars to use sex-appeal in performances. The Jonestown Massacre made people wary of cult religions that cut members off from society. The Clarence Thomas scandal made Americans more aware of sexual harassment. And the Scopes Monkey Trial changed the way science is taught in classrooms across the country.

From Hollywood murder trials to spies, anarchists, money-grubbing televangelists, explicitly sexual art, vigilante justice, and Harvard psychedelic studies, the 50 scandals in this book span the 20th century and have all affected the trajectory of our country in some way. They touch on every part of society: politics, music, religion, sports, war, race relations, art, TV, movies, journalism, gay rights, and everything in between. Each item in *Scandalous!* details what happened in the scandal, offers unbelievable quotes, talks about how the event affected American culture and politics, and includes a short list of related scandals (so you can see how, sometimes, history is doomed to repeat itself!).

After you read *Scandalous!*, you'll have a better understanding of how things in all realms of life have gotten to be the way they are today. And you may even become a history buff while you're at it.

#### **Pop Duo Milli Vanilli Lip Sync Their Way to a Grammy**

**THE SCOOP:** The pop group Milli Vanilli, headed by Rob Pilatus and Fab Morvan, won the Grammy for best new artist of 1989. But just eight months later, Pilatus and Morvan became the joke of the music industry, were forced to return their Grammy, and were indicted in at least 22 different lawsuits

#### **THE PLAYERS:**

Franz Farian—German music producer

Rob Pilatus—Lip syncing pop star #1

Rab Morvan—Lip syncing pop star #2

**WHAT WENT DOWN:** The pop band Milli Vanilli took the US by storm in 1989. Their first album, *Girl*

You Know It's True, with its catchy mix of dance, electro-pop, and rap, quickly became a crazy success in the US. Not only did the album go platinum six times, it also had three number one Billboard hits—"Blame it on the Rain," "Girl I'm Gonna Miss You," and "Baby Don't Forget My Number." As a result of the album's popularity, the group's two vocalists, the dreadlocked and be-spandexed hotties Rob Pilatus and Fab Morvan, became superstars, winning a Grammy and three American Music Awards in one year.

Then, during an MTV performance at a theme park in Connecticut during the summer of 1989, something strange happened. There was a glitch with the sound system, and during the song "Girl You Know It's True," the line "girl you know it's ..." repeated over and over again through the speakers. Pilatus and Morvan initially tried to sing and dance along, but it soon became clear that the music wasn't coming from them—it was coming from a prerecorded track; the duo ran off stage. Suddenly, everyone—especially music journalists—were asking questions about whether or not Pilatus and Morvan actually were the voices of Milli Vanilli.

Franz Farian, Milli Vanilli's producer, along with Pilatus and Morvan, denied accusations that the band might be lip-syncing for more than a year. But in November of 1990, Farian—under pressure from the press and from Pilatus and Morvan (who were pushing to sing on the next release)—finally issued a statement admitting that Pilatus and Morvan weren't the vocal artists for Milli Vanilli.

It turns out that Farian had created the dance-pop act that became Milli Vanilli in the late 1980s, hoping it would be a big hit in the European Club scene. The act was made up of a collection of musicians, including multiple vocalists. The band made its first album, All or Nothing, in Europe in 1988. Farian decided to put Pilatus and Morvan, two dancer/models from the Munich club scene, on the album's cover and have them perform at appearances to prerecorded music. He thought their good looks and club style would make the album more popular and marketable than the real performers. (Pilatus and Morvan were also aspiring musicians but didn't perform anything on the album.) Sure enough, Milli Vanilli became a huge hit in Europe.

Soon, the American record company Arista, noticing Milli Vanilli's success, signed the duo, remixed the album, and released it under the name Girl You Know It's True. As far as American fans had been concerned, Pilatus and Morvan were Milli Vanilli. Later, Arista claimed it never knew that Pilatus and Morvan weren't the real singers, though Pilatus and Morvan claimed Arista did.

Milli Vanilli was hardly the first band to be fronted by performers who were seen as more marketable than the actual musicians, but because they won a Grammy, sold so many records, and became so popular, the fake-out wasn't taken lightly by the public or the press. By the end of 1990, Milli Vanilli was forced to return its Grammy by the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (the people who give out Grammys). Despite attempts at a comeback, Pilatus and Morvan faded into obscurity, remaining a symbol of how superficial the music world is.

#### WHY WE STILL CARE:

The scandal illustrated how focused the public is on image. After the launch of MTV and music videos in 1981, musicians no longer had the luxury of letting their music speak for itself. A successful group had to combine music, performance, and looks to become stars.

**The scandal helped modern-day unaccredited artists get credited.** After the scandal, artists who sang unaccredited on albums began to demand the recognition and royalties they had coming. Martha Wash sang unaccredited lead vocals for a number of groups, including the house group Black Box's two top-ten hits, "Everybody, Everybody" and "Strike It Up," and C+C Music Factory's number one hit "Gonna Make You Sweat (Everybody Dance Now)." In the pre Milli Vanilli era, she was told she was unmarketable because of her weight, but after the scandal she successfully sued to receive credit and royalties on the songs she sang.

#### THE AFTERMATH:

**The Band:** After the scandal broke in 1990, Pilatus and Morvan created a band called *Rob & Fab* and released a self-titled album, *Rob & Fab*, on which they actually sang. It was not a success. The second Milli Vanilli album was ready for release at the time the scandal broke, and Farian released it as *The Real Milli Vanilli*. It was also not very successful.

**Rob Pilatus:** Pilatus, unfortunately, struggled with substance abuse, and wound up spending time in jail for assault and vandalism. In 1998, he was found dead at 33 in a Frankfurt, Germany, hotel room from an accidental drug and alcohol overdose.

**Fab Morvan:** In the aftermath of the lip-syncing scandal, Morvan, ironically, became a session musician (an unaccredited musical performer for hire, much like the real vocalists behind Milli Vanilli). He also worked as a DJ and released a solo album, *Love Revolution*, which critics liked, though it barely sold.

#### QUOTABLES:

"Musically, we are more talented than any Bob Dylan ... we are more talented than Paul McCartney. Mick Jagger ... I'm the new modern rock 'n' roll. I'm the new Elvis."

Rob Pilatus in a March 1990 interview with *Time* magazine, eight months before Farian came clean about the lip syncing

"We were living together in the projects, with two other musicians in Munich. We had nothing to eat, and we were unhappy. We wanted to be stars. And suddenly this guy gave us a chance, and we took it."

Rob Pilatus in November of 1990 at a press conference (just after the band's Grammy was revoked) explaining why he agreed to be part of the hoax.

#### MORE FAMOUS PREFAB BANDS

*The Funk Brothers.*

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