



More Room in a Broken Heart: The True Adventures of Carly Simon

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A love song to an American icon: the first full-length biography of Carly Simon, from an acclaimed music journalist who has known her for decades

She's won two Grammys and an Academy Award, and her albums have sold more than forty million copies. Her music has touched countless lives since her debut in the 1970s, yet her own life story has remained unpublished—until now. Tapping private archives, family interviews, and a forty-year friendship with the legend herself, Stephen Davis at last captures Carly Simon's extraordinary journey from shy teenager to superstar. *I Believe in Love* candidly covers everything her fans want to know, including

Growing up with her father, publishing mogul Richard Simon
The Bob Dylan turning point that launched her career
The real story behind "You're So Vain"
Carly's severe stage fright (she's the only musical guest to pretape an *SNL* segment)
Romantic involvements with Mick Jagger, Warren Beatty, and Cat Stevens
How Carly and James Taylor went from being pop music's reigning couple to independent souls living at opposite ends of Massachusetts
Surviving breast cancer
Her recent financial and spiritual crises

Along the way, Davis vividly takes readers back to some of the most powerful eras in American music history and delivers a tribute worthy of the artist and her loyal fans, who know that nobody does it better than Carly Simon.

More Room in a Broken Heart: The True Adventures of Carly Simon Details

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From Reader Review More Room in a Broken Heart: The True Adventures of Carly Simon for online ebook

Jim Nemeth says

DO NOT buy this book thinking that it is a true biography or has Carly's approval in any way or form.

Please be aware that this is NOT a authorized biography of Carly Simon. Carly had NO input to this book and is furious and upset with the untrue picture Davis paints of her within.

The book is a collection of uncredited quotes from other sources. The author did little original research of his own - what is the author's own actual contributions are fabrications. He additionally "borrowed" freely from other sources. Authors Sheila Weller (Girls Like Us) and Roger Friedman have both blogged about their concern and unhappiness that their researched and published works have been quoted in this book without citation.

The author did not interview Carly Simon, her family, nor her friends or ANY musicians or producers Carly has worked with over the 40+ years of her career.

Ken says

I read this over the weekend, and although I am not a fan of this type of music (Lite Rock/Soft Rock/Adult Contemporary), the story of Carly Simon's life made for an entertaining and gossipy read. She is no doubt a child of wealth and privilege, and has led a remarkable 'storybook life'. Her father was the co-founder of Simon and Schuster, she is the friend and lover to numerous super famous men, the ex-wife of James Taylor, and she has written and sung songs that are undeniably part of America's Pop Lexicon.

I enjoyed the book and was a bit dismayed to learn that it is perceived as a hatchet job, and paints an unfair portrait of the singer/song writer. I didn't get that impression at all. In the Forward to the book the author, Stephen Davis, claims that he was a big fan of The Simon Sisters, an early Folk Duo with Carly and her sister, Lucy, and he didn't meet Carly until he went home with a college roommate, and found that this guy's sister (Peter Simon, who later became a noted professional photographer) was "The" Carly Simon. Davis readily admits that his work is an 'unauthorized' biography. However, the book does contain a few factual errors. The author claims that the great Brooklyn Dodger, Duke Snider, was Black! And, apparently there are many more, but this to me seemed the most glaring.

Overall I thought that the Carly Simon portrayed in this book is a sexy, big-hearted, artistically gifted, yet neurotic woman, and it didn't seem like she would have much of a problem with this characterization. But, maybe I'm wrong.

Robin says

The reviews are all over the map and I'm unsure how much of what the author relates is the truth (he states he is a "friend" of the family but others say he's not and had no business writing this biography) but I found

some of it quite interesting. I've been a fan since Carly burst on the scene with "That's the Way I've Always Heard It Should Be" and liked learning more about the inspiration behind her songs. And yes, I freely admit it, the gossip about her various marriages and mental health were also interesting.

If you are a fan of Simon's, then read this for insight into her career and personal life, which should probably be taken with a few grains of salt; but if not, don't bother.

Mary Shafer says

It's been a while since I read this, but overall I thought it was clearly well-researched and I enjoyed it. I'm a huge fan of Carly's music, and it's clear from both this book and Carly's own memoir that her self-image and life were shaped by the "anything goes" spirit of the 60s and 70s, and irrevocably shaped by two apparently truly self-absorbed parents with some serious dysfunction going on. I feel that this version of her story is more clear-eyed and generally more openly revelatory of insight into her life, though some of the stuff Carly wrote in her memoir was almost embarrassingly so. I don't know if I'd have been able to write such personal stuff for the whole world to see and judge the way she did, but then again, I felt that in some ways, she was deliberately obfuscatory when it served her purposes. My advice to anyone who wants to get a more well-rounded picture of Carly Simon's life and work would be to read both books; this one first because it's more comprehensive, and then her own memoir, for some more intimate and perhaps surprising details.

Louise says

There is a huge gap between what this is and what a biography of this amazing singer songwriter should be. On the positive side, author Steven Davis has created a chronology of Simon's life. The merely reportorial parts of the book are good, but an attitude, like that expressed in the title continues to surface.

Carly Simon is singular in her work, style and achievements. She made full voiced melodic (almost operatic) recordings and was successful in competition with hard rock, the Beatles, folk music and more. In the time before the Pat Benetar's, the Debbie Harry's and Madonna, female music was cute and ethereal with "he centered" lyrics. She had no parallel then, and still does not, in her style, content and vocal presentation.

Being a Simon fan, I picked this up (at the public library) despite all the red flags. First, of course, is the title/subtitle which damn the sad parts of Simon's life, not with faint praise, but with a snide remark. There are no credits, no foot notes, no bibliography and the photos are random, hazy, and perhaps public domain. In the first few pages you learn that the author knew Carly's brother in the 60's. After that, if this friendship remained, he'd have surely noted it.

Not only is all this unattributed information of dubious quality, the way it is presented is strange. At times it's reportorial in style, at other times it is cold, at other times just plain snide. For instance, p. 123, the author says Carly "wanted to feel she had a home at Electra, a company named after a princess who killed her father." Her relationships are continually presented in a way that puts her down. He seems to want to report on how the men in her life hurt her. Since he's chosen to focus on this, he should have put it in the context of Carly's incredible success and the tenor of the times.

While much of the content is dubious, the chronology of the recordings and the details of who performed on

them and who produced them can be verified. In assembling this, Davis has created a chronology of this incredible life.

I'd like to give this 2.5 stars. The chronology was great and with it as background, I visited YouTube and had a deeper understanding of what I heard and saw. Since 2.5 is not possible, I'll go up because of the work involved in assembling this. My advice to the writer is, next time, profile someone you like and respect.

Hopefully, there will be a good biography of Carly Simon in the future that will explore what she did and take into account the pressures under which she achieved.

Carly Thompson says

I began reading this biography and gave up and skimmed most of it. My problem is that the author is a very poor stylist. He writes of Carly Simon's birth, "World War II began for America in late 1941, and a third daughter, Carly Elizabeth Simon, was born toward its conclusion." What type of biographer leaves the birth date of his subject vague? That sentence made me think Carly Simon was born in December 1941, when she was born in June of 1945. Much of the book is written as then this happened, then something else happened. (For example: "Now it's late March 1975 and the Vietnam War is almost over.) There is also no index and sources are not cited, so it is unclear if Davis did original research/interviews or not. Not recommended.

Angie says

Even though this was an unauthorized biography, Carly Simon stated that the author was a friend of the family and she had known him very well during her lifetime. Much of it is music oriented, i.e. when she wrote, what she wrote and what she sang, and is easily depicted in chronological form. The parts that were really interesting to me was her shyness, the fact that she stuttered and suffered from stage fright her entire adult life and, of course, the story of her relationship and marriage to James Taylor. All of it brought back memories from my teenage years.

Very interesting and a good read.

Val Rich says

I love Carly and enjoyed reading about her, but, in retrospect, I would rather have read her autobiography...and still may. Fascinating woman.

Roo says

I enjoyed the many references in this book to my old haunts on the East Coast - The Bitter End and The Village in NYC in the early 1970's.

Although author Stephen Davis claims the book is approved by Simon, the writing felt a bit voyeuristic to me.

Davis wrote about Buzzy Linhart, whom I saw back in the day at Central Park, 1972. And he mentions Cat Stevens, Joni Mitchell, Joan Baez, and especially, Mick Jagger. I didn't know about James Taylor's addictions - almost in a way I wish I didn't have to know about it now! My memories of listening to "Sweet Baby James," "Fire & Rain," and other songs are intertwined with my adolescence and I would have preferred to keep those memories a bit more innocent.

Towards the latter third of the book I was having trouble keeping track of all the meanings of all of Simon's songs. The author was thorough to a fault with listing all the recording sessions, and all the songs included in each album. I liked that he gave the context for each year's music scene by noting the top songs of the time, but the minute details of every single song she ever sang made it drudgery to finish the book.

If you have all of Carly Simon's albums and are familiar with every song, then this book may have more meaning to you. The book reminds the reader of her later songs that were used on movie soundtracks, which goes to her importance as a female singer-songwriter of our time.

Debra says

I have loved Carly's music since the beginning of her solo career, and hoped this might provide more than gossipy info. It doesn't, really. Some things I'd read elsewhere, and that, along with sloppy errors (dates mostly) make this a less than compelling read. But I DID read it all and in one weekend, so obviously it was enough to keep me turning the pages.

I wish Carly would offer her own story, but based on the knowledge I do have of her, her background and history would seem to preclude that possibility.

I'm just gonna go and listen to all her songs again, and enjoy what she's shared with us.

Janet Cleary says

Carly Simon is one of my favorite singer-songwriters ever. Used to like James Taylor, but after reading this, don't like him quite so much. (Who knew he was such a bastard of a husband)? Went to YouTube quite a bit to hear songs I haven't heard in a while plus others I didn't remember.

Robin says

First of all, I didn't expect great writing, just a readable "popular" biography. However, I did expect someone to fact-check the manuscript. George Gershwin died of a heart attack? Duke Snider was black? Record executive Mo "Austin?" Hall & Oates's big hit "Every Time She Goes Away?" Mia Farrow is Woody Allen's ex-wife? These are inexcusable errors. And who knows how many I missed?? Pathetic.

This is the first Goodreads review I have written...because I'm just so disgusted by the state of publishing. This is hardly the first non-fiction book I've read with errors or inconsistencies, but these were just so numerous and glaring.

Beek says

anticipation is making me wait... the band played on

Steve says

Back in the day, (before people actually said, “Back in the day”), when this reviewer was playing Carly Simon music on the radio, I had no concept of her personal life. Absolutely no clue. I didn’t read the trade publications much. With the possible exception of Billboard magazine occasionally. But now, thanks to her biographer, Stephen Davis, boy, do I know now!

As Davis so graphically illustrates in this unauthorized biography, it’s interesting to note that both Simon and her first husband, James Taylor, came from similar privileged backgrounds. It would also seem both wrestled with demons for large portions of their adult life, largely through no fault of their own, but caused at least in part by less than ideal relationships with their fathers.

Davis documents a lot of National Inquirer type gossip about Simon and Taylor and their family and friends. Within these 409 pages you’ll find some juicy stuff. Like stories about Taylor, “an alcoholic, drug-addicted husband.” Like stories about her adulterous affair with Jeremy Irons. Simon allegedly not only aborted a child fathered by Irons but the singer “did” cocaine with the actor for the first time. Not to mention two failed marriages before a third. Alleged one night stands. Numerous affairs, including a hidden relationship with Mick Jagger. No wonder she has refused numerous attempts by others to have her write her own biography. She told one would-be biographer, “I would pity you, having to re-live my experience, I would say, 89 percent of which was painful.”

Aside from the Simon family dirty laundry that gets aired here, Davis seems obsessed with analyzing every single song Simon and Taylor ever wrote and produced. He breaks down every Simon album, including what every tune is about, whom or what inspired it and the musicians, engineers and producers who recorded it. Unless you love to read the Yellow Pages from cover-to-cover, this could be 89 percent painful for you. Davis may have created the world’s longest album liner notes.

By and large, this is a sad but true adventure but told well. As Larry King would say, it’s a real page turner. I couldn’t put it down. But, I should’ve paid more attention. Back in the day.

Al says

“Unauthorized biography”—two words that conjure both good and bad with readers. For some it means a juicy biography with incidents that the subject would prefer suppressed. For others it likely leads to a poorly written “clip job” by a writer with little or no access to the subject, so he has to rely on public sources. This “unauthorized biography” of Carly Simon tends towards the latter, unfortunately. Simon’s life has been a veritable open book with years of candid interviews and revealing song lyrics for a lazy author to mine. “More Room in a Broken Heart” is a conventional, chronological narrative with a generally sympathetic take on the singer’s struggles with men, creativity and anxiety disorders. While many readers may come to the book with memories of Simon’s decade-long marriage to James Taylor, they’ll leave appreciating her whole

life—an idyllic youth with exposure to many of the greats in the arts, a floundering start as a young women in a male dominated recording industry, a determined middle age raising two teens as a single mother, and later years mourning the loss of friends and family while battling cancer. Author Stephen Davis seems thorough in his coverage of Simon's career, he bogs down with descriptions of every song Simon released, which may be of limited interest (and questionable value given some of his interpretations--see his take on "Jesse"). There is precious little career insight or overview with Davis especially rushed in his coverage of Simon's recent years, as if he was facing an impending deadline to publish. Readers in search of a well written and researched biography would be better served reading "Girls Like Us," Sheila Weller's far superior biography of Simon, Joni Mitchell and Carole King.
