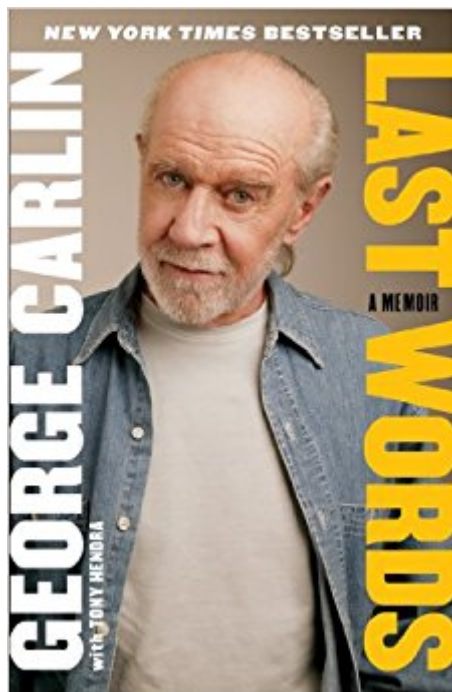


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## Last Words



## Synopsis

Now in paperback, this posthumous work by an American classic was a fitting last book, an instant bestseller, and a huge success! One of the undisputed heavyweight champions of American comedy, with nineteen appearances on the Johnny Carson show, thirteen HBO specials, five Grammys, and a critical Supreme Court battle over censorship under his belt, George Carlin saw it all throughout his extraordinary fifty-year career, and made fun of most of it. *Last Words* is the story of the man behind some of the most seminal comedy of the last half century, blending his signature acerbic humor with never-before-told stories from his own life, including encounters with a Who's Who of 1970s celebrity—from Lenny Bruce to Hugh Hefner—and the origins of some of his most famous standup routines. Carlin's early conflicts, his long struggle with substance abuse, his turbulent relationships with his family, and his triumphs over catastrophic setbacks all fueled the unique comedic worldview he brought to the stage. From the heights of stardom to the low points few knew about, *Last Words* is told with the same razor-sharp wit and unblinking honesty that made Carlin one of the best-loved comedians in American history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

For more than a decade before his 2008 death, groundbreaking stand-up comedian Carlin had been working on his autobiography with writer Hendra (Father Joe), who finished it by distilling hours of conversations with the irascible social commentator. Armed with an eye for detail and a seemingly photographic memory, Carlin retraces his life in full, chronicling petty crimes and stolen kisses,

escalating drug problems and the death of his wife with unflinching honesty. He applies that same precision to the mechanics of comedy, giving would-be comics a veteran's insight into the dynamics of crowds, the structure of a performance and the importance (or unimportance) of the social and political landscape. Tracing his evolution as a comedian from the first time he made his mother laugh to performing for an empty room in Baltimore to the series of HBO specials he made over the course of his career, Carlin peppers his narrative with the routines that have made him famous (though this is no gagfest, a la Brain Droppings, When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops?, etc.). Throughout, Carlin comes off as a smart, humble everyman with a strong distaste for hypocrisy in all its forms; fans may be surprised at his discipline and drive, and anyone interested in comedy should find this autobio as illuminating as it is funny. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"The book is at turns biting and touching, and often both, which is what you would expect from a man for whom the sacred was profane and the profane, sacred." --"Entertainment Weekly"..frank and insightful..." --"Time" magazine"Seven particular words are associated with the late comedian George Carlin, and sentimental is not one of them. But that's the surprising portrait that emerges from "Last Words".

--"Houston Chronicle""["Last Words"] sounds as if he is still with us, rested and ready to ridicule the latest cultural hypocrisies." --"The Washington Times""For comedy fans, this book is vital. It's easily worth its weight in gold for the biting observations on showbiz and its personalities." --"San Francisco Chronicle""This is not a collection of setups and punch lines, but a candid, fearless accounting of his life and art..."Last Words" shows a comic master at the height of his storytelling powers and with no limit to what he had left to say." --"L.A. Times""Last Words", a posthumous autobiography from George Carlin, is a jazzy, inward-looking piece of work...as a chronicler of the working of his own mind, Carlin is terrific." -- "The New York Times"..what "Last Words" ultimately reveals is how Carlin became a political protester, slam poet, cynic, polemicist and performance artist whose messages were delivered under the veneer of humor."

--"Washington Post"

Okay, so I AM biased. BUT! I even learned things about my dad that I didn't know. So imagine, if you are a fan, how fun it will be for you. My dad kept his inner life pretty close to his chest, and in this book he shows his hand fully. Enjoy.

As a fan from childhood, this man, and legend, became one of the voices that guided me throughout

the years. Not blindly, I questioned it all, but it seemed his words resonated deeply within me and I was always fascinated by that. Now, as an adult and aspiring artist, I understand so much more than ever and powerfully moved by what he had to finally say...his last advice for me. I've learned so much and I'm certain all other fans will have the same astounding experience as I have had.

"The worst thing about groups are their values. Traditional values, American values, family values, shared values, OUR values. Just code for white middle-class prejudices and discrimination, justification for greed and hatred." (CARLIN STATEMENT)"I believe in giving everyone, as I encounter them, one at a time the full value of their dignity and their honor in the world. Whether I'm seen as a celebrity on an elevator or I'm just George the stranger, I open myself to them and I take them in and I give them everything I would want myself in terms of treatment, feeling and consideration. I call that a value." (CARLIN ANSWER)Some critics here label George Carlin as an overly angry man. Come on people, he was a truly brilliant satirist! Would these same people enjoy watching an emotionless musical performance or dramatic play? The guy was a comedic Mozart! He knew comedy, debate, politics, rhetoric, satire, and most of all, he knew human nature! Anger motivates people to ask why, and Carlin offers up plenty of answers to the whys from his own thoughtful analyses of a huge range of subjects! He pokes fun at all kinds of ridiculous things that human beings do, and he does this by questioning his own experiences. The process of self-examination is exactly what made Carlin so entertaining, amusing and discerning. His entire repertoire evolved from his own self-examination! He could poke fun at either side of a debate just as easily and with just as much conviction, but what makes great comedy is to find the most ridiculous side, and make fun of it. Only a great comedian could deliver ideas the way that George did. He made the audience think about our own experiences in life and ask questions. This memoir gives wonderful insight into the life of George Carlin and is delivered in truly funny and insightful Carlin manner! For other Carlin lovers out there, a moment of silence followed by one huge worldwide party to celebrate the life and unfortunate death of one of the greatest comedians ever! We love you George, and we miss you! For any Carlin haters out there, I'm sure George is looking down from the sky and blowing you a big Bronx cheer!

All I know is that (for me) George Carlin had more insight and common sense than many of his era. Last Words brings closure to his longtime fans. It take George at his word, and only HIS word. Loved you George!

Very enjoyable read. I got a good picture of his personality and a sort of outline of his life. Not much detail on his relationships but a good view of his work and growth.

When I was in my teens and early 20s, I read a lot of business books, biographies, and magazines (such as Forbes). I believed - - quite incorrectly - - that by reading the wisdom, lessons, and teachings of various luminaries and success stories, I would learn the rules of business and increase my chances of success. In retrospect, I am pretty sure that 99% of that effort was a waste. Indeed, I got a business degree in college, and that was a waste as well. It would be far better, for those who elect to go to college, to either (a) learn how to think creatively; or (b) learn the mechanics of something concrete that one cannot simply intuit their way through. If you're going to design a bridge or perform heart surgery, yeah, you'd better go to school. So I stopped reading all that stuff a long, long time ago. I did buy and read the Steve Jobs biography (which I pre-ordered long before the man died) just because he's Steve Jobs. But the idea that some people seem to have that they can emulate someone's success by reading about their success is horribly misplaced and unsupported by facts. I was reminded of this because I just finished reading, for the second time, George Carlin's final book called, fittingly, Last Words. I had bought Last Words a couple of years ago and loved it, and I stuck it on a bookshelf. I saw it again a few days ago, and for no particular reason, I decided to read it again.....and I couldn't put it down. The book is as sharp, clever, and captivating as any of Carlin's performances from the 1990s or 2000s. He has an amazing career arc, including terrible problems with drug use (as did as his wife and, not surprisingly, his daughter), poverty so severe he was living out of his car, tax woes that took decades to overcome, and more than a couple close calls with death. The most important thread in the whole tale is his development as a creative force. This didn't really begin to take root until the early 1980s, and it picked up pace in the early 1990s and started to make exponential gains. I have long admired both the quality of the material he wrote, some of which borders on genius, as well as his delivery, which was honed by decades of artistry over the course of thousands and thousands of live shows for millions of people. So why do I refer to this as a "business" book? Isn't it just a biography about a really great comedian? Well, in my own opinion, reading this book yielded more for me in terms of business insights than any of the dozens of books I went through from Harvard Business Press. To understand deeply Carlin's challenges, false starts, the dollars-and-cents cost of him watching the accounting side of what he was doing with his life - - it all adds up to a magnificent canvas representing nearly half a century of what was, in the end, not just a marvelous creative gift but a complex venture as well.

I would assume the lack of details in the middle years is due to heavy amounts of cocaine. I dig this book but there should be more stories or more details to the stories in it. The forward talks about there being volumes of stuff to pick from but this seems to be slimmed down. It's not terribly long so it could have been fine to add another 70 or so pages seeing as the guy has depth enough worth reading about. That and less skits. We all can hear the famous skits in many different places so stuff that wasn't aired or recorded would have filled this out a little nicer. Again still a most entertaining read.

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