



Last Words: A Memoir

By George Carlin

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With fourteen HBO specials, five Grammys, a critical Supreme Court battle over censorship, and countless appearances on the international comedy circuit, George Carlin saw it all and made fun of most of it.

Carlin's journey to stardom began in the rough-and-tumble neighborhoods of New York in the 1950s, where class and culture wars planted the seeds for some of his earliest material including the infamous Seven Dirty Words routine. Carlin describes his major influences as an up-and-coming comic, talking about the origins of some of his most famous stand-up routines. The people he encountered on his rise to stardom reads like a Who's Who of 1970s celebrity, from Lenny Bruce who took him under his wing to Hugh Hefner who gave him his first big shot.

Carlin spares no details as he describes his life and career. He discusses his own battle with substance abuse, his often turbulent relationships with the women in his life, and the politics that informed so much of his stand-up. From the high points on stage to low points in the hospital, *Last Words* is George Carlin's life told with the same brash, unblinking honesty that defined his comedy.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

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.

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Review

.."frank and insightful..." --"Time" magazine

About the Author

Born in New York City in 1937, **George Dennis Patrick Carlin** was one of the greatest and most influential stand-up comedians of all time. He appeared on *The Tonight Show* more than 130 times, starred in an unprecedented 14 HBO Specials, hosted the first *Saturday Night Live* and penned three *New York Times* bestselling books. Of the 23 solo albums recorded by Mr. Carlin, 11 were Grammy nominated and he took home the coveted statue five times including a 2001 Grammy win for Best Spoken Comedy Album for his reading of his best seller *Brain Droppings*. In 2002, Carlin was awarded the Freedom of Speech Award by the First Amendment Center in cooperation with the U.S. Comedy Arts Festival in Aspen, Colorado, and he was the named 11th recipient of The Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize for American Humor in June of 2008. George Carlin passed away at age 71 on June 22, 2008 in Santa Monica, California.

Tony Hendra was recently described by *The Independent of London* as one of the most brilliant comic talents of the post-war period. He began his comedic career with *Graham Chapman of Monty Python*, appeared six times on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, was one of the original editors of *National Lampoon*, edited the classic parody *Not The New York Times*, starred in *This Is Spinal Tap*, and co-created and co-produced the long-running British satirical series *Spitting Image* for which he was nominated for a British Academy Award. He has written or edited dozens of books, most of them satirical, with the exception of two *New York Times* bestsellers: *Brotherhood* (2001) and *Father Joe* (2004). He is a senior member of the Board of the nation-wide story-telling community, *The Moth*.

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