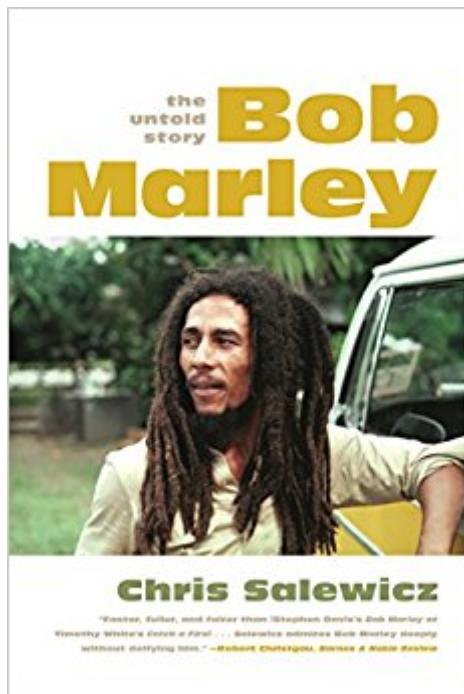


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Bob Marley: The Untold Story



Synopsis

What was it about Bob Marley that made him so popular in a world dominated by rock 'n' roll? How is it that he not only has remained the single most successful reggae artist ever, but also has become a shining beacon of radicalism and peace to generation after generation of fans? Chris Salewicz, the bestselling author of *Redemption Song*, the classic biography of Joe Strummer, interviewed Marley in Jamaica in 1979. Now, for the first time, in this thorough, detailed account of Marley's life and the world in which he grew up, Salewicz illuminates everything from the Rastafari religion and the musical scene in Jamaica to the spirit of the man himself. Interviews with dozens of people who knew Marley and have never spoken before are woven through the narrative as Salewicz seeks to explain why Marley has become such an enigmatic and heroic figure, loved by millions all over the world.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The usual tropes of pop stardom attain a mythic resonance in this lively biography of the Jamaican reggae demigod. Journalist Salewicz (*Redemption Song: The Ballad of Joe Strummer*) draws an earnest portrait of Marley: his Rastafarian creed—he worshipped the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie—was unusually flamboyant; his marijuana use was probably heavier than other pop stars' and, per the Rasta sacrament of spliff-fueled Bible reading, certainly more sanctimonious; his feuds with managers, escalating to flourished pistols and beatings, were more operatic. His politics were weighty—his embroilment in Jamaican party rivalries in the 1970s prompted an assassination attempt—as was his canonization as an icon of black empowerment and

countercultural protest. Salewicz's profile is full of piquant yet troubling details—Marley was apparently present at the lynching of his would-be assassins—and insights into the rough Jamaican surroundings that gave Marley's music its edgy desperation and millennial fervor. He is agnostic about whether Marley was the reincarnation of Christ—against Marley's uncanny prophecies were his adulteries and occasional wife beating—but gushes faithfully about the music, which he calls tantalizingly world-shaking in its scintillating essence. Salewicz's profile is as gritty, entertaining, and starry-eyed as Marley himself. Photos. (May) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Faster, fuller, and fairer than [Stephen Davis's Bob Marley or Timothy White's *Catch a Fire*] . . . Salewicz admires Bob Marley deeply without deifying him.”¹ Robert Christgau, *Barnes & Noble Review* “Chris Salewicz's account of the life of the late, great Robert Nesta Marley contains a raft of never-before published interviews with scores of people who knew the reggae singer. Indeed, Salewicz—a respected journalist whose *Joe Strummer* biography is also well worth a read—got to know Marley in 1979, and it's this authenticity that sets the book apart from other biographies about the man and the legend. From Bob's humble beginnings in Nine Miles to the years in Kingston and the fame, fortune and untimely death in 1981, *Bob Marley: The Untold Story* is the definitive account of the man and the myth.”² Steve Richards, *The Independent* “Chris Salewicz, who worked for the *NME* throughout the 1970s, is well versed in the details of Marley's ascent. What makes his book worth reading, however, is his grasp of Marley's Jamaican background. Salewicz interviewed him in Kingston in 1979 and has clearly spent a lot of time since tracking down friends and relatives, many of whom have not been tapped before . . . [Salewicz] invades and illuminates Marley's privacy more effectively than previous biographers.”³ Robert Sandall, *The Sunday Times* (London) “Chris Salewicz's obvious knowledge . . . delivers the bulk of this literary epitaph on the rasta man. Those insights help the tome along at a reggae beat and, to Salewicz's credit, the reportage is evenly balanced between pro and con, making this an enjoyable, if at times disturbing, read . . . Whatever we know of Bob Marley's life will always remain open to conjecture, but at the very least in Salewicz's biography, we can take a step closer to what went on behind closed doors, in between the pleasure and pain. For Marley/ reggae fans, this work will probably stand the test, whereas for the uninitiated, it will serve as a meaty introduction to the ‘legend’ of Trench Town.”⁴ Teri Louise Kelly, *The Independent Weekly* (Australia)

This book appealed to me because of Salewicz's history as a journalist with New Music Express and his association with Punk Rock in the late 70's. I read Stephen Davis' book on Bob Marley many years ago and figured this book would have a different angle. It covers a lot of Bob's early life, which is heart breaking but also makes for terrific contrast to his rise as an international star. It gave me a better understanding of Bob's struggle and why he wrote and composed the way he did. He was a deeply religious and spiritual man and it's refreshing to read about that aspect of him in this day and age where religious devotion has such association with negativity and violence. Some readers might glaze over at the minute details of his relationships with managers and the parade of musicians that come and go (at times even I, a huge fan, couldn't keep track of everyone) but it's very in depth and a tremendously enjoyable read.

I read this book with great interest. It is my first Marley biography so I don't have much to compare it with. But I know the music very well, which is where this writer lost points with me. He wrote that "Buffalo Soldier" was about Native Americans who fought in the US Civil War. This demonstrates a profound, unforgivable misunderstanding of the song and, indeed, The Marley Canon. It's like saying Dylan's "Maggie's Farm" is about picking grapes in a vineyard. The book also suffers quite significantly from the author's inability to understand patois - and his apparent inability to find someone who does. These elements seriously undermined my appreciation and trust in an otherwise fine and well researched biography.

An important book if you have been touched by the music of Bob Marley, especially those songs that you could feel arose not only from a spiritual well-spring, but from the ghettos of Jamaica and experiences that were authentically in solidarity with the Third World and those in poverty. The book goes into much detail into his life and work, and, if one has listened to all of Bob's albums and felt that different things were going on historically and musically, this read will help you truly sort them out. I read the book hoping to understand more of the social justice aspect of his work, and I feel that it helped me to do that, though it also helped me to revisit so much that I love about the art of Bob Marley and the Wailers. Much about Peter Tosh in the book as well, an artist who helped to shape my political consciousness at a young age like no other back in the 1980's. I found the evidence that the CIA sponsored the assassination attempt on Marley very important, and some other material of this sort was included, but I wish that there was more. "...Bob's true rebel spirit lies in his devastatingly accurate depictions of ghetto life and official oppression and corruption. The

pain of 'Slave Driver; the anger of 'Rebel Music (3 O'Clock Roadblock)', 'The Belly Full (But We Hungry)', and 'Rat Race'; the inspired vision of recording Haile Selassie's speech to the United Nation as 'War'; in his raising aloft the arms of Prime Minister Michael Manley and opposition leader Edward Seaga in an effort at unity; in his forming relationships with Kingston's gang leaders in an effort to cool them out; in his dispensing thousands of dollars at a time to penniless mothers; in his efforts to bestride the racial and economic barriers inherent in Jamaica and throughout Babylon; in his establishing the concept of 'Babylon' in our culture and souls. And isn't it curious that Bob Marley is seen as a rebel because he had a genuine belief in peace and an end to oppression?"

Great info; but way too detailed & moves along to slowly

I had high hoped for this book. But it peters out in the later chapters. And the tone is inconsistent. Sort if written like a hip college newspaper article. If you're looking for a good overall Marley bio, the Steven Davis book is better (and more scholarly.)

The book was delivered fast and It's a very good read! I LOVE NESTA ROBERT MARLY AKA BOB!

This is an interesting history, jammed with events, names, and places that give a lasting impression of Bob Marley's life and music. It keeps moving, has good background material with each new chapter, and has lots of musical information. It's great reading; after reading it, it's the kind of book you keep for reference - all in a compact format with an excellent index. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

I am avid Bob Marley fan. Truth be told the first half of the book was hard to read. The parts about Bob's life in nine miles and Trenchtown were interesting but the minutia about every little detail about Bob's initial recording work was hard to read. I didn't want to skip that part cos I was afraid I would miss something important. When I got to the 2nd half I couldn't put the book down, reading it every where I went, the salon, the bus, at night - it is indeed a very thorough account. I'm about to read Timothy White's Catch a Fire which I've read is the most definitive account but I don't know if any book can surpass this one in terms of detail. There are some parts where I question whether they are fact or fiction, e.g. The I-Threes were about to be replaced and also Bob confronted his attempted assassins. Mind you in an earlier part of the book he states that the assassins were never identified. I give it 5 stars because I could not put this book down.

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