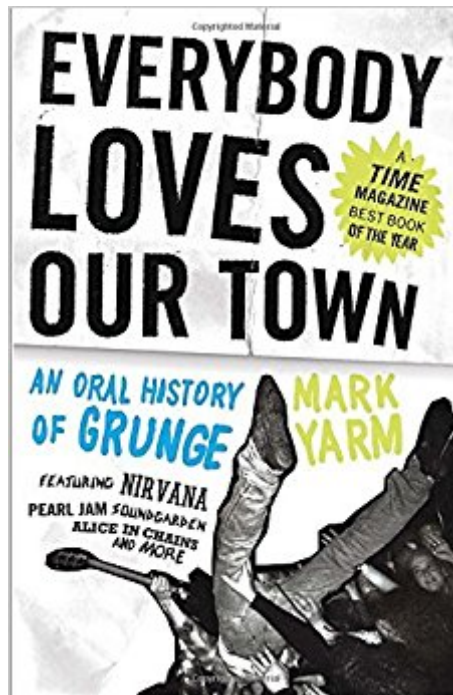


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# Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History Of Grunge



## Synopsis

A Time Magazine Best Book of 2011, Featuring Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Alice In Chains, Mudhoney and more! Twenty years after the release of Nirvana's landmark album *Nevermind* comes *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge*, the definitive word on the grunge era, straight from the mouths of those at the center of it all. In 1986, fledgling Seattle label C/Z Records released *Deep Six*, a compilation featuring a half-dozen local bands: Soundgarden, Green River, Melvins, Malfunkshun, the U-Men and Skin Yard. Though it sold miserably, the record made music history by documenting a burgeoning regional sound, the raw fusion of heavy metal and punk rock that we now know as grunge. But it wasn't until five years later, with the seemingly overnight success of Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit*, that grunge became a household word and Seattle ground zero for the nineties alternative-rock explosion. *Everybody Loves Our Town* captures the grunge era in the words of the musicians, producers, managers, record executives, video directors, photographers, journalists, publicists, club owners, roadies, scenesters and hangers-on who lived through it. The book tells the whole story: from the founding of the *Deep Six* bands to the worldwide success of grunge's big four (Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and Alice in Chains); from the rise of Seattle's cash-poor, hype-rich indie label Sub Pop to the major-label feeding frenzy that overtook the Pacific Northwest; from the simple joys of making noise at basement parties and tiny rock clubs to the tragic, lonely deaths of superstars Kurt Cobain and Layne Staley. Drawn from more than 250 new interviews with members of Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Screaming Trees, Hole, Melvins, Mudhoney, Green River, Mother Love Bone, Temple of the Dog, Mad Season, L7, Babes in Toyland, 7 Year Bitch, TAD, the U-Men, Candlebox and many more and featuring previously untold stories and never-before-published photographs, *Everybody Loves Our Town* is at once a moving, funny, lurid, and hugely insightful portrait of an extraordinary musical era.

## Book Information

Paperback: 592 pages

Publisher: Three Rivers Press; 2.12.2012 edition (March 13, 2012)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 030746444X

ISBN-13: 978-0307464446

Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 1.2 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 91 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #123,255 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #135 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Popular](#) #286 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > History & Criticism](#) #324 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Music > Musical Genres > Rock](#)

## Customer Reviews

An Interview with Author Mark Yarm Q.) Why do you think grunge took off in Seattle as opposed to somewhere else at that time? A lot of it had to do with geographical isolation. Many people don't seem to realize that in the '80s--before the Starbucks/Microsoft/ boom era--Seattle wasn't the cosmopolitan place it is today. People in the rest of the country pretty much considered it the hinterlands; a couple interviewees told me that back in the day, people who weren't familiar with Seattle would ask them, in all sincerity, "Seattle? Aren't there cowboys and Indians out there?" Often times, touring bands would simply skip Seattle because it was too far out of their way. So, in effect, musicians in that region had to make their own fun. And in the process, they honed their own sound. Q.) What are the biggest misconceptions people have about grunge? Probably the biggest one is that all these musicians were overly earnest gloom mongers sticking needles in their arms. Of course, a few were overly earnest and some were sticking needles in their arms, but for the most part--and I think this comes across in the book--these musicians were just super-funny and huge jokesters. Q.) Where does the book's title come from? Speaking of humor in grunge| "Everybody loves our town" is a lyric from "Overblown," an extremely arch song Mudhoney wrote for the Cameron Crowe movie Singles. It pretty much deflates the hype surrounding the scene at the time and takes a semi-veiled jab at at least one grunge superstar. Q.) What's your favorite grunge song? It almost seems too obvious an answer, but Mudhoney's "Touch Me I'm Sick" is pretty much perfect--and perfectly encapsulates the scuzzy "grunge" guitar sound and scabrous humor of the scene. Nirvana's "Negative Creep" comes to mind too. Q.) Is there a grunge band that should have made it big that did not? Had their super-charismatic lead singer Andrew Wood not died of a drug overdose in 1990, Mother Love Bone--the band from which Pearl Jam sprung--would likely have made it big. Also, TAD--a band fronted by Tad Doyle, who was marketed as a 300-pound ex-butcher from Boise--appeared primed for success in the early '90s. But TAD was beset

by bad luck at nearly every turn. Their downward spiral began when their album 8-Way Santa had to be yanked from shelves because the band used this hilarious, very saucy photo of a couple on the cover without their permission. (Google it.) Legend has it that the woman in the picture had since found God, and the couple took legal action. Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge author Mark Yarm put together this list of 15 grunge tracks (ranging from the obscure to the chart-topping) discussed in the book. 1. Mudhoney "Touch Me I'm Sick" 2. U-Men "They" 3. Green River "Ain't Nothing to Do" 4. Soundgarden "Nothing to Say" 5. Nirvana "Love Buzz" 6. TAD "Jack" 7. 7 Year Bitch "Lorna" 8. Mother Love Bone "Crown of Thorns" 9. Temple of the Dog "Hunger Strike" 10. Pearl Jam "Even Flow" 11. Alice in Chains "Fear the Voices" 12. Screaming Trees "Nearly Lost You" 13. Melvins "Sky Pup" 14. Candlebox "You" 15. Mudhoney "Overblown" A Look Inside Everybody Loves Our Town Pearl Jam Nirvana Soundgarden --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

"Yarm's affectionate, gossipy, detailed look at the highs and lows of the contemporary Seattle music scene is one of the most essential rock books of recent years." Kirkus Review, \*Starred Review\* "Hardcore fans of grunge will treasure this." Publishers Weekly "Yarm, a former editor of Blender, interviewed more than 250 musicians, scenesters, and record business types to deliver a personal, comprehensive history of grunge music. Highly recommended." Library Journal "Mark Yarm has assembled the gospels of Grunge music. Here is a warts-and-elbows refresher course for those of us who still find our memories of the era a little hazy." Chuck Palahniuk, author of Fight Club "A very noble record of the grunge scene and an excellent addition to the growing library of oral history music books." Legs McNeil, coauthor of Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk and the forthcoming Resident Punk "Great oral histories are rare. Hewing a narrative from all those chaotic and often conflicting memories with testimony alone and no guide-prose or stage direction is difficult. Making that somehow intimate and epic is nearly impossible. When a writer pulls it off, as Mark has with Everybody Loves Our Town, it's really a gift: the subject or scene finally gets its definitive record and the reader gains what feels like a room full of brand new friends. One of the best rock reads in a very long time." Marc Spitz (co-author We Got The Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of LA Punk,

music blogger VanityFair.com). "In Everybody Loves Our Town, Mark Yarm collects and dispenses remarkable insights about a genre no one even wants to claim as their own. As a child of grunge who spent a humiliating chunk of the 1990s in an Alice in Chains t-shirt I loved this book; it clarified so many things about a sound and a time I thought I already knew."

—Amanda Petrusich, author of *It Still Moves: Lost Songs, Lost Highways, and the Search for the Next American Music* "A deeply funny story, as well as a deeply sad story--the glorious Nineties moment when a bunch of punk rock bands from Seattle accidentally blew up into the world's biggest noise. Mark Yarm gives the definitive chronicle of how it all happened, and how it ended too soon. But the book also makes you appreciate how weird it is that this moment happened at all."

—Rob Sheffield, author of *Love Is A Mix Tape and Talking To Girls About Duran Duran* "A definitive, irreplaceable chronicle of one of rock-n-roll's greatest eras. It should sit tall on any rock lover's bookshelf."

—Neal Pollack, author of *Never Mind The Pollacks* "In an attempt to trace the real roots of grunge, journalist Mark Yarm compiled an exhaustive oral history from the people who lived it. In his book *Everybody Loves Our Town*, there are interviews with everyone from the early adopters to those that were late to the party, but nevertheless helped extend [grunge's] shadow of influence by turning it into a look for the world to emulate."

—The Fader "This massively readable tome gathers recollections from every grunge band you've ever heard of (Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Soundgarden, Melvins) and some you haven't (we hardly knew ye, Skin Yard) The genre's first truly comprehensive insider history—it's gossipy and fascinating, with so much backstabbing and death it's like Shakespeare, if Shakespeare had written about heroin addicts with bad hair."

—Revolver (4 out of 4 stars) "An impressive display of reportorial industriousness. It's the feel-bad rock book of the fall."

—Bloomberg Businessweek "Oral history is an art in itself. It's why *Everybody Loves Our Town* will endure as a classic of monumental scale."

—Paste Magazine. "For hardcore fans or people just curious about what the fuss was all about, Mark Yarm's excellent new book *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* is well worth the read. Yarm has done an admirable job of assembling an engaging, funny and ultimately sad narrative by letting the people who helped create the Jet City sound talk about what happened in their own words."

—Seattle Post-Intelligencer "Yarm's account captures the essential tension that made the era so compelling."

—Greg Kot, Chicago Tribune "We finished all five hundred and forty-two pages of this book in two days, abandoning all responsibility (this, friends, is why we do not

have children; had there been any children about us, we would have locked these unfortunate creatures in the bathroom, so as to not be distracted) and staying up until two in the morning, reading whole chunks of it out loud to poor long-suffering Support

Team."--TheRejectionist.com Mark Yarm's superb book, *Everybody Loves Our Town: A History of Grunge* details the dramatic rise of the grunge movement and all of its players, including Cobain, Love and Vedder, told through the voices of the people that lived through it.--Hollywood

Reporter *"I came away from this book with a big smile on my face. Lots of it is like a gray day in western Washington; you've been kicked out of yet another band, and your girlfriend is spending far too much time with the drummer from the Melvins or the Screaming Trees. In the end, though, *Everybody Loves Our Town* made me want to be young, stupid and lucky again.*

Mainly, it made me want to be young."--The Washington Post *"Everybody Loves Our Town should inspire new conversations about the unique culture and people that made grunge so unusual and unforgettable to so many fans. The book is timely, as 2011 marks the 20-year anniversary of Nirvana's *Nevermind* and Pearl Jam's multi-platinum debut album, *Ten*. *Everybody Loves Our Town* is as good an*

*excuse as any to put on an Alice in Chains CD and curl up with a good book about some great old friends with whom we haven't spent much time in a while.*"--The Washington Independent Review of Books *"Everybody Loves Our Town is authoritatively researched and compiled, often very funny and always just a little bit sad.*

*"Buffalo News" Like a very extended and entertaining all-night bull-session among everyone who mattered during the late-'80s/early-'90s music scene."*--Seattle Weekly "The scope is encyclopaedic and the closeness to the subject unparalleled."--Record Collector "A wild ride that is in turns uplifting and

tragic." *"Your Flesh* Named one of the top music books of 2011 by UK Telegraph "Riveting, gossipy, and impossible to put down until the last quote has been read." --New York

magazine's *Vulture* blog *"This exhaustive oral history features unknowns, cult figures, supporting players and stars; each gets the time he or she deserves as Yarm pieces together the arc of a scene that built itself from scratch, blossomed beyond most people's dreams, and then crashed. Yes, there are plenty of Kurt Cobain stories. But there's much more, too • indelible characters, weird scenes, creative chaos, laughs and tragedy and lots of cheap*

*beer.*" *"NPR.org "Gen-X music geeks: Here's your holy grail."* --Tulsa

World "The best book on music I've read this year." --Omaha World-Herald *"This volume could have been a huge, snarky compendium of gossip and score settling from the inhabitants of a claustrophobically insular local music scene. And it is, but in the best possible way • and*

it's also much, much more. Yarm has culled the story of grunge from the people who created it, and their testimony is remarkable for its eloquence and its passion and its fairness and its anger. • Lev Grossman, Time (named one of the magazine's Top 10 nonfiction books of 2011) "A Herculean work of interviewing and editing which gives everyone a voice, from the biggest stars to the lowliest foot soldiers. Though the Seattle scene's stew of folly, feuding, rampant drug addiction and a startling number of fatalities might have made for a voyeuristic tale, Yarm leaves the reader full of empathy for young men and women swept up in a cultural moment they couldn't control. • The Guardian (named a best music book of the year) "Exhilarating Mark Yarm's brilliant and exhaustive oral history of grunge is full of vivid observations. Some 250 interviews with those intimately associated with the most unlikely musical sensation of all time piece together a story that is hilarious and tragic and utterly gripping. • Sunday Times of London A Gawker.com Best Thing We Read All Year selection "[A] lively, funny, melancholy and exhaustive oral history. For all its eventual compromise and dissolution, Seattle was briefly an exhilarating pop cultural moment to rank with the greats. Yarm's labour of love has well and truly done it justice. • Time Out London "If you loved the '90s and you haven't read this book, you MUST. I'm absolutely obsessed with Mark Yarm's masterpiece right now. • USAToday.com's Pop Candy column "Full of so many entertaining stories and thrilling anecdotes that we have read it cover-to-cover TWICE. You should do the same!" • VH1.com "The definitive oral history of the Seattle music scene, period. • Alternative Press

Loved it. LOVED it. If I could give more than 5 stars I would. This book just blew me away. Easily the best book on music I've ever read, and probably the best book I've read on anything in several years. Having grown up in Seattle, I've been a fan of the Seattle bands since the early 90s. Up until very recently I actually segregated my "Seattle" bands from all the others in my CD collection. I found out just how little I actually knew about them all by reading this book. First off, the drugs, wow. I knew there were a lot of drugs being used, but holy cow I didn't have any clue as to how bad it was. It's front and center here because it took such a horrific toll on the musicians and those around them, from Kurt Cobain and Layne Staley to Stephanie Sargent and Mike Starr. But the one that really seemed to kick the entire community in the gut was Andrew Wood. To hear about what these

people meant to the people who knew them, in their own words, it just takes you way beyond the music, which is often secondary in this history. Grunge seemed to have exploded onto the airwaves when Nirvana released *Nevermind*, but in the long arc of its rise and fall that was actually nearer the end than the beginning. Yarm tracked down virtually anyone and everyone who planted the seeds with the punk bands from throughout western Washington, like the U-Men and Melvins. While the book has plenty of Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, and Alice in Chains, there is no shortage of other bands, including the Screaming Trees, Candlebox, the Gits, 7 Year Bitch, Mudhoney, and Green River. And don't forget Cat Butt. (How could anyone, with a name like that?) He also gives a lot of space to the guys at Sub Pop records, who were instrumental in helping a lot of these bands find an audience. The book is entirely told by the people who were there when it all happened, at least a couple hundred in all. Fortunately, Yarm included a handy alphabetical reference list in the back, which I was constantly flipping to to remember just who someone was and what their role in the music community was. It's alternately sad (lots of death), funny, and gossipy, almost to the point of catty, particularly whenever Courtney Love is involved. She really came across to me as an utterly psychotic bitch. So much so that I feel bad for liking her music. There weren't many others who had much nice to say about her. No surprise there. What did surprise me was how much everyone else hated Candlebox, a band I've always liked. I never realized what outcasts they were on the local music scene. I bought this book as a Christmas gift for my niece a couple years ago. At the time I thought, "I should read this before I send it to her." I didn't, but I finally got my own copy and am glad I did. Fantastic.

To be honest I was never a big grunge music enthusiast. My teenage years were the 1960s so I was into the British Invasion and garage bands. But being a rock music fan, record collector and lifelong resident of the Seattle-Tacoma area, I picked up this book on a whim. Wham! Reading the first chapter, I was hooked and had a hard time putting it down. Fascinating, funny, horrendous and brutally honest, a lot of musicians and scene makers offer their memories and insights of the Seattle punk, metal and grunge explosion. Once you start reading the incredible story these remarkable people have to tell, it is a very compelling page-turner.

This is my favorite book EVER! I am a big, big fan of Seattle and it's notorious grunge scene. This book is an oral history, meaning, it is a compilation of interviews from key players from the scene. Some names you might know, some you might not. But their story plays a vital role in the development of music and influences for the genre. I didn't think I would enjoy the "oral history," but



is so well done, you almost feel like you are reading someone's diary. It is the personal thoughts and stories straight from the people who lived it! And it is also well organized by chapter, so it all makes sense and flows nicely. If you like Mother Love Bone, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Pearl Jam and Mudhoney--this is the book for you! It also touches on all the other bands that never made it big and how all of their stories put together is what made the genre thrive in the first place! It's brilliant and kudos to Mark Yarm for putting it all together!

Anything you've ever needed to know about any and every grunge band that mattered. Full of amazing stories (Kat Bjelland may or may not have had a crush on Layne Staley? Madonna may or may not have tried to seduce the singer for Candlebox?) and some unbelievable pictures. Of course, the ending is not the happiest and everyone knows how deep the demons plaguing the grunge scene ran, but this is a story of perseverance, love, and the joy of writing music and playing it with your friends to the people who matter most.

Amazing book. It's written as if it's the dialog to a documentary. Anyone who's followed the Seattle music scene back in the day, will love the insight. It's full of randomness, and insider's recollection of events that shaped the era. Taken for what it is, this book's a gold mine of historical bits. I'm glad Mark finally got this out, and it's a shame if a doc doesn't take shape from this.

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