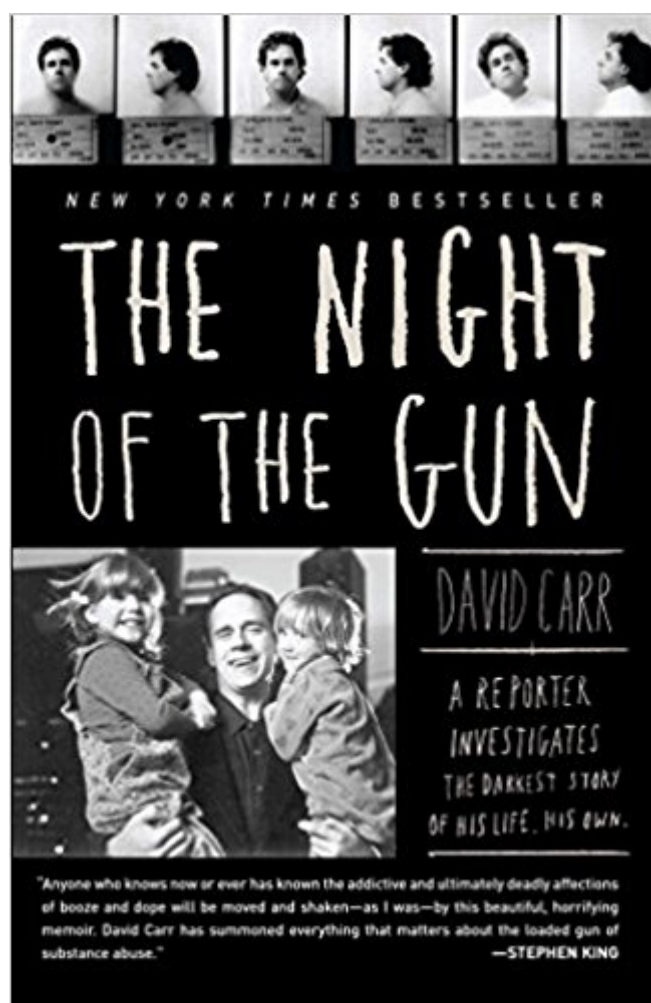


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# The Night Of The Gun: A Reporter Investigates The Darkest Story Of His Life. His Own.



## Synopsis

From David Carr (1956–2015), the “undeniably brilliant and dogged journalist” (Entertainment Weekly) and author of the instant New York Times bestseller that the Chicago Sun-Times called “a compelling tale of drug abuse, despair, and, finally, hope.” Do we remember only the stories we can live with? The ones that make us look good in the rearview mirror? In *The Night of the Gun*, David Carr redefines memoir with the revelatory story of his years as an addict and chronicles his journey from crack-house regular to regular columnist for The New York Times. Built on sixty videotaped interviews, legal and medical records, and three years of reporting, *The Night of the Gun* is a ferocious tale that uses the tools of journalism to fact-check the past. Carr’s investigation of his own history reveals that his odyssey through addiction, recovery, cancer, and life as a single parent was far more harrowing—and, in the end, more miraculous—than he allowed himself to remember. Fierce, gritty, and remarkable, *The Night of the Gun* is “an odyssey you’ll find hard to forget.” (People).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Best of the Month, August 2008: In his fabulously entertaining *The Kid Stays in the Picture*, legendary Hollywood producer Robert Evans wrote: "There are three sides to every story: yours, mine, and the truth." David Carr’s riveting debut memoir, *The Night of the Gun*, takes this theory to the extreme, as the New York Times reporter embarks on a three-year fact-finding mission to revisit

his harrowing past as a drug addict and discovers that the search for answers can reveal many versions of the truth. Carr acknowledges that you can't write a my-life-as-an-addict story without the recent memoir scandals of James Frey and others weighing you down, but he regains the reader's trust by relying on his reporting skills to conduct dozens of often uncomfortable interviews with old party buddies, cops, and ex-girlfriends and follow an endless paper trail of legal and medical records, mug shots, and rejection letters. The kaleidoscopic narrative follows Carr through failed relationships and botched jobs, in and out of rehab and all manner of unsavory places in between, with cameos from the likes of Tom Arnold, Jayson Blair, and Barbara Bush. Admittedly, it's hard to love David Carr--sometimes you barely like the guy. How can you feel sympathy for a man who was smoking crack with his pregnant girlfriend when her water broke? But plenty of dark humor rushes through the book, and knowing that this troubled man will make it--will survive addiction, fight cancer, raise his twin girls--makes you want to stick around for the full 400-page journey. --Brad Thomas Parsons --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An intriguing premise informs Carr's memoir of drug addiction--he went back to his hometown of Minneapolis and interviewed the friends, lovers and family members who witnessed his downfall. A successful, albeit hard-partying, journalist, Carr developed a taste for coke that led him to smoke and shoot the drug. At the height of his use in the late 1980s, his similarly addicted girlfriend gave birth to twin daughters. Carr, now a New York Times columnist, gives both the lowlights of his addiction (the fights, binges and arrests) as well as the painstaking reconstruction of his life. Soon after he quit drugs, he was thrown for another loop when he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's lymphoma. Unfortunately, the book is less a real investigation of his life than an anecdotal chronicle of wild behavior. What's more, his clinical approach (he videotaped all his interviews), meant to create context, sometimes distances readers from it. By turns self-consciously prurient and intentionally vague, Carr tends to jump back and forth in time within the narrative, leaving the book strangely incoherent. (Aug.) 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.

Full disclosure: I knew David and he was incredibly generous with my undergrads and teacher institute students at Stony Brook University. I wouldn't say we were friends, but he did take my calls and emails, so...I am far from neutral. I've heard a lot of talkers and he was easily the most gifted extemporaneous crafter of unique sentences. The book mostly upholds that standard, which is remarkable, given the familiarity of the terrain of recovery literature. Which is why I hate this book.

He was one of a few very useful people of his generation and now he is dead and the book reminds me what I loved about David's work. So, I can't chide him for taking a little too much joy in how cool his life was at various times. I can't conk him for simultaneously hating on junkie memoirs and writing a classic. And I can't tell him I loved the way he stuffed in New York's face the redemptive power of his love for his girls and the comfort he took in religion. So not cool, both of those things. And so Carr to speak plainly of them. I'd gladly trade the life of several of the leading lights of journalism-about-journalism for another year of Carr making sense of it.

I liked this book because there were a whole lot of quotable lines that made me think.

It's not exactly a page turner since you know going in how things turned out, but I like tales of people who got to ridiculous lows and then triumphed after a lot of hard work. I think one of the more important parts of his story is how much the state of Minnesota did to help him get him back on his feet, first by paying for him to get six months of treatment (after treatment had not worked for him four times previously—a fairly typical tale), then helping him with welfare and food stamps while he got back into the world of journalism, and then with medical care when he was diagnosed with cancer. There were a few lines about him being a single dad that were beautiful. I liked how he pointed out that the hero-like qualities attributed to him as a single father were vastly different than if he'd been a single mother. He writes, "Truly ennobling personal narratives describe a person overcoming the bad hand that fate has dealt them, not someone like me, who takes good cards and sets them on fire." He does a compelling job of pointing out how our memories, particularly if our brains have marinated in alcohol and illegal chemicals for years, aren't reliable. He did some despicable things, but he had a family that was familiar with substance abuse who helped when he was ready for help, and he worked to make amends and get in with the recovery community. His tale of relapse, unfortunately, was also not a new story, but still interesting and painful to read about. Again, he had good work and a caring family to help him back from the brink yet again, which is not a guarantee of success, but it sure doesn't hurt.

This book is somewhat entertaining because he knows how to write, but wow does he over do quoting and repeating stats and discussions on the memory issues he may or may not have, and give a bunch of people/examples on who always knew he was talented and good. Overall there isn't much takeaway from it, nothing new or a wow factor. I don't see why people give it such high ratings. In the Greater Scheme of Things, yes some people dig themselves out of serious

self-abuse and trials of health issues and become productive citizens, so good job on that. Apart from tons of examples of people who thought he was a-ok, what bothered me is that he appears to have a serious lack of respect for women. "As far as I could tell, taking care of my children did not require ovaries".. because women were "hissing" at him in times of his girls having public behavior issues. He also writes, "Women often marry men in the belief that they will grow into something else". Researched based? For a man that admits that he often used troubled women in place of real relationships, was guilty of domestic violence and was awful at monogamy, I think he could have given more introspection about why he is this way, but that definitely wasn't what he wanted the book to be about. He says it was the drugs and somewhat the troubled women themselves. Agreed, he does say it was bad, but those things do not make a man violent towards a woman, it is a serious lack of respect, and nothing in his book showed me he saw it as a problem in him that it clearly is.

One of the most interesting aspects of this autobiographical tale of addiction and the havoc it can wreak on the addict and their friends and family is the approach Carr takes to getting to the truth of his story. A successful journalist, Carr employs the same skills he used to write honest and engaging articles for The New York Times and other publications. At the core of this memoir is the issue of memory and how unreliable it is. Only through diligent research that included video recording many of the witnesses to his self-destruction, is Carr able to get at certain truths about himself. Those truths are often harrowing and ugly but through it all, Carr's heart and writing talent shines through.

I knew David Carr, having worked with him on many stories when he was covering media for the New York Times. I intentionally didn't want to read his book while I was dealing with him as a reporter covering my company - and I'm glad I waited. But though I learned things I hadn't known about Carr's history while he was still alive, and he did some pretty despicable things, reading this book did not change my opinion of him as a good, straightforward, intelligent person with a gift for writing and an unfortunately addictive personality. I feel heartbroken that he is gone because he added a great deal to this world - and his book is worth reading, whether you knew him or not.

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