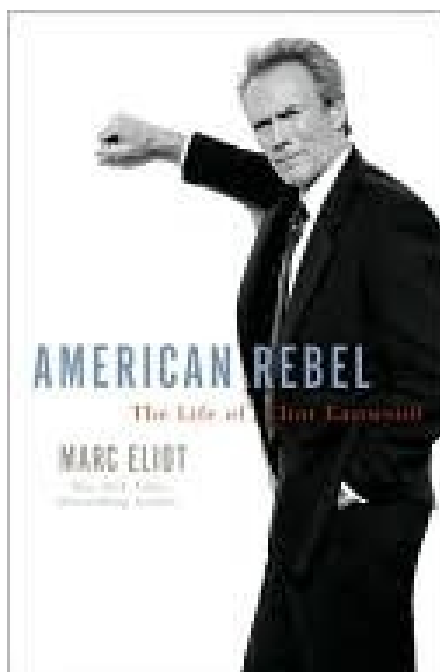




American Rebel: The Life of Clint Eastwood

Marc Eliot

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As an actor, he seduces us with his tough-guy charm. As a director and producer, he amazes us with his artistry and technical savvy. As a Hollywood icon, Clint Eastwood, one of film's greatest living legends, represents some of the finest cinematic achievements in the history of American cinema.

In *American Rebel*, bestselling author and acclaimed film historian Marc Eliot examines the ever-exciting, often-tumultuous arc of Clint Eastwood's life and career. Unlike past biographers, Eliot writes with unflinching candor about Eastwood's highs and lows, his artistic successes and failures, and the fascinating, complex relationship between his life and his craft. Eliot's prodigious research reveals how a college dropout and unambitious playboy rose to fame as Hollywood's "sexy rebel," eventually and against all odds becoming a star in the Academy pantheon as a multiple Oscar winner. Spanning decades, *American Rebel* covers the best of Eastwood's oeuvre, films that have fast become American classics—*Fistful of Dollars*, *Dirty Harry*, *Unforgiven*, *Mystic River*, *Million Dollar Baby*, and *Gran Torino*.

Filled with remarkable insights into Eastwood's personal life and public work, *American Rebel* is highly entertaining and the most complete biography of one of Hollywood's truly respected and beloved stars—an actor who, despite being the *Man with No Name*, has left his indelible mark on the world of motion pictures.

From the Hardcover edition.

American Rebel: The Life of Clint Eastwood Details

Date : Published (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN :

Author : Marc Eliot

Format : Kindle Edition 383 pages

Genre : Biography, Nonfiction, Culture, Film

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From Reader Review American Rebel: The Life of Clint Eastwood for online ebook

Sean O'Hara says

This is a breezy, shallow biography with little in the way of insight or original research.

Discussion of Eastwood's films is virtually non-existent -- Eliot gives a small plot synopsis and a rundown of pre-production, followed by a summary of critical reviews that seems to be gleaned from Rotten Tomatoes. There's hardly any discussion of filming, unless you count rumors about which co-star Eastwood was boffing, and he doesn't seem to've interviewed Eastwood's co-stars, even though most are still alive, relying instead upon already published material. Want to know about the difficulties of filming Kelly's Heroes in Yugoslavia? Not in here. How about behind-the-scenes stories about Hackman, Freeman and Clint on the set of Unforgiven? Nope. Details on the filming of the Dollars trilogy? Again, only info on pre-production and reception. Nor does Eliot offer any detailed analysis of Eastwood's films beyond the trite and obvious -- does anyone need to be told that Eastwood likes terse loners?

Eliot focuses a good part of the book on Eastwood's personal life, and although we hear about his many affairs and bastards, we never get any idea of Eastwood as a parent -- how did his children turn out, how much of a role did he have in their lives. If you're going to examine the man's whole life, examine the whole thing, not just the salacious details.

In the afterword, Eliot takes to task Eastwood's other biographers, Schickel and McGilligan, the first for being too kiss-ass and the other for being overly catty, but for all their faults they turned out books with original insights (books upon which Eliot relied for his own book), not just lazy rehashings of other people's research.

Karla says

Unbelievably fast read, and at the end I had to wonder what the point of it was. The author, as far as I could tell, didn't do any original research like interviews with co-stars and acquaintances. All the sources were previously published, so it had a slapdash magazine article feel to the whole thing. It's a stark contrast to Susan Compo's bio of Warren Oates which, despite its flaws, had a hefty chunk of new material and revelations (such as the first, forgotten, Mrs. Oates and many interviews with Oates' colleagues). Eliot here went through Eastwood's career like an impatient, bored tour guide, lingering longest on the Locke lawsuit - which I skimmed out of sheer boredom.

I don't like biographies that end up being an author's pompous Film Theory 101 thesis, and this one wasn't. (However, Eliot had a WTF moment by comparing Clint to [Dirty Harry:] Callahan by saying the names shared a C, L and an N. Okaaaay.....was the word count a little shy or what?) But it was so shallow and abrupt for each movie in Eastwood's career that I felt like I was reading bullet points.

Disappointing, but biographies aren't my thing anyway. I prefer to watch the films and enjoy, and not bother with what happens behind the camera.

IMO, the best thing about the book is the dust jacket. Hello!

Art says

Reading this book, I realized I've seen most of the movies Clint Eastwood has starred in over the years. My father loved Dirty Harry and was exceptionally proud when he found out that the first handgun I purchased (many years ago) was a S&W Model 29. In case you are unfamiliar with Dirty Harry, he carries a S&W Model 29.

This new biography does a very good job of covering Eastwood's movie career and his private life. Untangling Eastwood from the characters he has played on the big screen isn't an easy job. I thought I'd throw out some interesting facts and quotes from the book:

Born on May 31, 1930, Clinton Eastwood Jr. weighed a whopping eleven pounds, six ounces. Eastwood would grow to be a lean 6'4."

Health and Exercise: Eastwood exercises and eats right to stay in shape. While working on Where Eagles Dare, Eastwood closely observed Richard Burton and his problems. Although, at the time, Burton was a bigger star than Eastwood, Burton had become an out-of-shape, financially strapped, self-pitying drunk. Eastwood didn't want that for his future.

Manly Movie Characters: Eastwood is best known for playing no name cowboys, rednecks, and Dirty Harry. Recently my son and I were watching Joe Kidd when my wife breezed through the room, commenting, "I knew this was a Clint Eastwood movie. There's no dialogue, just shooting." Personally, I thought shooting was a type of dialogue. Like Dirty Harry says, "Nothing wrong with shooting as long as the right people get shot!" My favorite Eastwood movie characters: 1) Josey Wales, a Confederate soldier who refuses to surrender at the end of the Civil War 2) Dirty Harry Callahan 3) The Preacher in Pale Rider.

"We live in more of a pussy generation now, where everybody's become used to saying, 'Well, how do we handle it psychologically?' In [the old] days, you just punched the bully back and duked it out. Even if the guy was older and could push you around, at least you were respected for fighting back, and you'd be left alone from then on." --Clint Eastwood

On Acting and Directing in Film: "I think I learned more about direction from Don Siegel than from anybody else...he shoots lean, and he shoots what he wants. He knew when he had it, and he didn't need to cover his ass with a dozen different angles." --Clint Eastwood

As one might gather from the statement above, Eastwood likes to shoot a film quickly. He detests slow, perfectionist directors and actors (i.e. Kevin Costner). Eastwood likes his dialogue to generally be short and to the point.

On his Critics: "People thought I was a right-wing fanatic...all Harry was doing was obeying a higher moral law...people even said I was a racist because I shot a Black bank robber. Well, shit, Blacks rob banks, too. That film gave four Black stuntmen work. Nobody talked about that." --Clint Eastwood

On the Psychology of Women: "There are a million Mr. Perfects. The nice guys come and go, but the

Bogarts, the Cagneys, the Gables, John Wayne and up through Mitchum---they're all a bit of...they really could treat women like dirt. I think women like to see other women put down when they're out of line. They have a dream of the guy who won't let them get away with anything... --Clint Eastwood

Politics: For one term, in the mid-'80s, Eastwood served as Carmel, CA's mayor. Because of his paleo-conservative and libertarian leanings, some on the right joked that they'd found Reagan's replacement. However, Eastwood found politics boring and this very private man didn't want the media snooping around in his personal life.

In 2005 Eastwood publicly vowed to kill Michael Moore if the documentarian ever showed up at his home.

Personal Life: Throughout Eastwood's first marriage, which lasted 31 years, there were whisperings that he was not the family man he appeared to be. In fact, throughout much of his life, Eastwood has been a lone-wolf womanizer. Although some women didn't respond to his advances (i.e. Bernadette Peters), many did. Married twice, Eastwood is the father of seven children by five different women.

"People can know him for years and never be sure of what he's thinking. He's one of the warmest people in the world, but there's a certain distance, a certain mystery to him." --Sondra Locke

Sondra Locke: "My feelings [about Sondra Locke] were the normal feelings you have when someone has been planning for many months to assault your children's inheritance." --Clint Eastwood

Eastwood's very public affair with Sondra Locke destroyed his first marriage. The two lived together for about 14 years. Pressured by Eastwood to abort her two pregnancies, Locke realized Eastwood wasn't intending to keep her around forever. When Eastwood told her she needed to move out of one of the homes he owned, Locke dug in her heels and refused to move. After some effort, Eastwood was able to remove Locke and her belongings from the home. Locke responded by suing Eastwood for palimony. She later sued him for fraud. The two would fight it out in court over a number of years before agreeing to a private settlement. It reportedly cost Eastwood several million dollars to get Locke completely out of his life.

I thought this book was well written and enjoyable to read. It's an interesting read about film making, Eastwood's approach to acting and directing, and Eastwood's very private life. I'd definitely recommend.

Maggieh says

This book is a fraud. Riddled with so many errors on simple easy-to-check details ---- like which actor played which part, what the main character's job is, who dies, the nominations/awards list is incomplete, although the book claims to be the "only complete" bio of its subject. But it also has 2 major errors: the well-known catchphrase "Do ya feel lucky? Well, do ya?" is given as "Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya?" which makes no sense; also, text has Eastwood losing a best-actor Oscar for 2008 for which he was not nominated ---- probably because he didn't act in the film. I don't like gotcha letters, but this book deserves every bit of condemnation readers can throw at it.

J.P. Willson says

I think everyone has been asked the question, "If you could meet someone famous whom would it be?" Although there are many people on my list, Clint Eastwood has always been way up near the top. Ever since I can remember anything about movies and movie stars I guess, yet I never really considered Clint Eastwood to be in the category of "movie star." I'm not sure why but after reading this book he certainly has earned his just rewards it would seem.

To me he just seemed like this normal everyday guy that was a so so actor, couldn't sing worth a damn, (watch Bronco Billy if you don't believe me), was better friends with an orangutan than with most people, but just seemed like he would be fun to hang out with, hoist a few cold ones with or listen to some jazz. He is also a hell of a pianist for those of you unaware...

I knew he had made a fair amount of movies and had also directed some very well received flicks. Yet as with anyone it would seem, there is a hell of a lot of things I was both unaware of and quite honestly, surprised to read about in this compilation of all things Eastwood.

Although one could consider the term "rebel" fitting simply from his movie personas, there is a much deeper meaning to the term used in the title here. I shall not spoil it for the avid Clint fans.

That being said, it is an enjoyable read with many "trysts" shall I dare say, along the way... Definitely worth a look for any fan.

Joy H. says

Added July 13, 2018. (first published January 1st 2009)
Narrated by author: Marc Eliot
Didn't hold my interest. Quit July 14, 2018.

Chris says

Initially I thought that a biography of a living figure done without his cooperation would be different or interesting but lack meat. This is not the case. It's a very even-handed and compelling book about the man. It's not hagiography, it's not judgmental. It just tells it like it is. Now I don't think a book this good could have been written with the collaboration of the subject. Eastwood is more than a rebel, he's his own man.

Ed says

They say never meet your heroes and I'm wondering if I should extend that to reading about them too. The author totally nails covering Eastwood's childhood by not deep diving into his GPA and cracking the hell on with it. This is where most biographies really wither but not here. Not only does the author demystify one of the most mythic figures in movies of the last 60 years, he paints a human portrait. The stinger is that portrait is also deeply unflattering on mostly personal but a little professionally as well. I never thought the Woody Allen and Jack Nicholson books would have less dirt than Eastwood but they do. That aside, every Eastwood movie (up to 2009) is covered and the behind the scenes is fascinating to a movie. In short this is what most biographies can't be: a page turner.

B. R. Reed says

Clint Eastwood is an American icon and I've loved the guy and his movies since the early 70s and Dirty Harry. This is a well done book and I found it very useful as a guide for all his movies and a good outline for his personal life. Clint is now 87 yrs old. Hard to believe. He has been tremendously active as both an actor and a director for 50-60 yrs. I might also add, very successful. I think what you see is what you get. I really think he's more libertarian than republican. His political philosophy is pretty much that people should mind their own business. The book has info re. his wives, girlfriends, set locations, his relationship with other actors, Hollywood politics, etc. There seemed to be a bit too much reliance on Sondra Locke and her book. Clint is a California boy, born and raised, and he has made the the Monterrey Peninsula his home for many decades. If you are interested in the life and times of Clint Eastwood then I think you might enjoy this book. Clint did not participate in the writing of this book. I picked it up for a \$1 and enjoyed it. Some of my favorite Eastwood movies are Coogan's Bluff, The Eiger Sanction, The Outlaw Josey Wales, High Plains Drifter, Thunderbolt and Lightfoot, Play Misty for Me, Unforgiven and others I'm forgetting. Good job Clint. Thanks for some great movie memories.

Margy says

I so admire Clint Eastwood's growth and talent as a director that I wanted to learn all about him. I'm almost sorry i read the book because I learned things that I prefer not to know about his private life. The writing was not terrific, but neither was it distracting.

Adriene says

Pretty shallow read. Marc Eliot reveals nothing new as the book reads like a wikipedia page. Small details on Clint Eastwood's films and very little insight. If you are looking for an in depth biography than this isn't it. However, if you are looking for a book that basically gives you the summaries off the back of dvd cases and petty gossip on who Clint was sleeping with at the time than this book is it.

Lee says

Interesting book, but, as may be inevitable for any book about an actor, a lot of the time, the narrative is just this list of films that Eastwood started and completed, so it gets kind of repetitive. Also, I could have done with some spoiler alerts. I was wanting to read this book as a way to get more interested in Eastwood's work, not because I had already seen all his films and was an expert on Eastwood. I found a lot of films I would like to watch, but I had skip the page or two where Eliot was ruining the film for me.

Kellie says

My family and I are big Clint Eastwood fans. My son and husband love the Dirty Harry and spaghetti western movies. I have seen several movies that have had Clint as an actor and or director and loved them. So, I decided to read this biography about him to learn more.

I didn't know what a womanizer he was! This doesn't change my feelings about him as an actor/director, but I have to say, I was surprised. He has fathered at least 7 children and was not necessarily married to the mother of any of them. He's only been married 2X, but I think there are at least 4 different mothers. A typical Hollywood story.

The author does a very good job describing all of the big series and movies Clint has either acted/directed or produced. I did find the Sondra Locke aspect very interesting. I never thought she was a really good actress. I don't think Hollywood did either. I think her career as an actress was solely influenced by Clint. After they split, she didn't have Clint to help her get roles. And I think that's why she was so hell bent on suing Clint. She had no other source of income.

The author knows a lot about Clint's movies and does a good job revealing Clint's ups and downs.

I was interested in this book because of who it's about. I felt the info was a bit tedious and boring at times. However, there were sections, especially towards the end, that peaked my interest and kept me reading a good while.

I am glad I read this and I think it's worth the read for any Eastwood fan.

Martijn Pollmann says

In this bio, one thing is made abundantly clear, up until the age of 65 Mr. Eastwood humped everything with a heartbeat. Which makes him sound less like a rebel and more like Paris Hilton. It is interesting how he didn't care much for the Hollywood establishment and did whatever he wanted in his career. If you have Clint on a high pedestal and regard him as legend though, don't read this.

On the bio itself, too much gossip and the writer is in love with his subject, turning everything that he's ever done into a masterpiece.

William Wren says

While any biography is going to be interpretative, American Rebel: The Life of Clint Eastwood feels less interpretative than peppered with a lot of personal opinion. Particularly in the latter half, it continually weaves from a paint-by-numbers recounting of events to a kind of cranky blogger's ranting.

They aren't particularly distinctive rants either; they're fashionable opinions about Hollywood, celebrities and so on. It's gossip magazine stuff; Perez Hilton with a better facility with language.

While it contains these run-of-the-mill dismissive opinions on things like the Academy Awards and certain Hollywood stars, it fails to contain any depth of analysis of Clint Eastwood as a filmmaker – actor, director, producer.

Does the life inform the work? Is there an artistic vision informing the movies and does it affect the life lived?

There are hints in the book but no real substance. It often appears to start down the road of that kind of analysis but quickly gets sidetracked by the opportunity to make another snarky comment.

The first half or so of the book is much better where it seems to rely more on available factual information than the opinions and anecdotes of others. It presents an Eastwood who begins largely directionless and callow — not surprising for a young man.

He gets into the world of movies as the path of least resistance, more or less. But as he continues to work he experiences a growing dissatisfaction with the types of roles he's restricted to and is often impatient with the working habits of some directors. He absorbs information on the sets he works on and starts finding focus, becoming increasingly serious about this career he finds himself in.

It's not clear, however, where or what or why his artistic vision emerges and the book doesn't help in this regard. The biography we're given runs on two tracks: the personal life and the career but you don't get a very distinct sense of how or where they intersect and inform one another.

To be fair to Eliot and his book, Clint Eastwood is famous for saying little and, when he does speak, saying next to nothing. He is a kind of poster child for reticence. He speaks strictly through his films.

Unfortunately, this book relies largely on conjecture that appears based on the summations of others and gossip. It's a quick, slight read that mirrors its subject quite well in that it reveals little.
