



# **Judy & Liza & Robert & Freddie & David & Sue & Me...: A Memoir**

*Stevie Phillips*

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## **Judy & Liza & Robert & Freddie & David & Sue & Me...: A Memoir** Stevie Phillips

No star burned more ferociously than Judy Garland. And nobody witnessed Garland's fierce talent at closer range than Stevie Phillips. During the Mad Men era, Stevie Phillips was a young woman muscling her way into the manscape of Manhattan's glittering office towers. After a stint as a secretary, she began working for Freddie Fields and David Begelman at Music Corporation of America (MCA) under the glare of legendary über-agent Lew Wasserman.

When MCA blew apart, Fields and Begelman created Creative Management Associates (CMA), and Stevie went along. Fields convinced Garland to come on board, and Stevie became, as she puts it, "Garland's shadow," putting out fires-figurative and literal-in order to get her to the next concert in the next down-and-out town. Phillips paints a portrait of Garland at the bitter end and although it was at times a nightmare, Phillips says, "She became my teacher," showing her "how to" and "how not to" live.

Stevie also represented Garland's fiercely talented daughter, Liza Minnelli, as well as Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Henry Fonda, George Roy Hill, Bob Fosse, Cat Stevens, and David Bowie. She produced both films and Broadway shows and counted her colleague, the legendary agent Sue Mengers, among her closest confidantes. Now Stevie Phillips reveals all in Judy & Liza & Robert & Freddie & David & Sue & Me..., a tough-talking memoir by a woman who worked with some of the biggest names in show business. It's a helluva ride.

## **Judy & Liza & Robert & Freddie & David & Sue & Me...: A Memoir Details**

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## **From Reader Review Judy & Liza & Robert & Freddie & David & Sue & Me...: A Memoir for online ebook**

### **Lisa says**

This book was interesting; however, I thought the author was not very sympathetic to Judy and much of her wording was in a way, " raunchy". Judy is not here to defend herself and I thought that while truthful facts can be given, this book lacked a large sense of " class" and I thought it could have been written with more compassion. It was an interesting book, but I wouldn't recommend it to others especially those who have a love for Judy Garland. Truth is truth, but truth can be presented without the need to degrade. Maybe it's just that I adore Judy Garland but I didn't like how her struggles were presented. They could have been presented, but how they were just seemed insensitive.

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### **J C says**

One of the best Memoirs that I have ever read! It is a page turner! The book is informative, touching , humorous and beautifully written.

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### **Christine Cody says**

With Judy Garland on the cover, this book appeared to be a fond remembrance of the author's career representing some of the entertainment world's best and brightest. Alas, it was not to be. For a very insightful, honest review of the book, I recommend reading the one written by Goodreads member Russell Sanders. I could not have said it any better...for that matter, I could not have said it as well!

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### **Marianne Meyers says**

Dirt-filled, sad, horrifying, ironic, and powerful glimpses into the 1960s world of Judy Garland, Liza, agents, talent, building into the author's becoming a successful female agent into the 1970s and beyond.

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### **cindy dwyer says**

#### **Firsthand Look at Judy**

In depth portrait of realizing that being a a Judy confidant would be an utterly exhausting experience. "Never meet your idols" rings so true

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## Joe Hartman says

It doesn't surprise me that a memoir about Judy in the early sixties, as told by someone "who was there", is loaded with pills and wine. It doesn't surprise me that Garland was emotional, needy, and mercurial. What does surprise me, is how unkind she comes across and how ungenerous. Whatever I've read about Garland's neediness, it's always been coupled with the fact that her generosity was equal to her need. So many people have spoken about what a giving stage partner she was, a giving friend, thoughtful to her fans, and her staff. Incidentally, her household staff, her chorus dancers, and collaborators which could certainly tell tales, have proven to be fiercely loyal to her.

So why does Stevie Phillips lack this loyalty? Why does she speak of such callous treatment from Garland? I was confused. First, let's assume that what she says is factually true, as much as 40 year old memories can be; skewed, somewhat callous, and definitely biased, but true. Well, think of Stevie from Garland's perspective.

Stevie Phillips was not Garland's Agent (responsible for booking Garland, promoting her, negotiating her appearances) in spite of what some of the press has claimed. She was not her personal assistant (someone Garland hired, whom she trusted and depended on to help with her daily life) as has also been claimed. She was a hired hand from Garland's talent agency making sure she got to her appointments. She was someone who served, and reported stories back to CMA. Surely the agency's very desire for someone to keep her on track, and the fact that they didn't care to do it themselves would stir up resentment. Phillips was forced upon Garland, and even if she eventually came to depend upon her and confide in her, there was never any forgetting that she couldn't be trusted. In short, to Garland, she was a spy who might play at being on her side, but was using her just like everyone else. And she did use Garland. Ms. Phillips admits to it. She saw terrible abuse, misuse, thieving, and stood by, let it happen to Garland, and protected herself. She was naive, didn't like Garland as a person, no matter how much she loved her as a performer (Phillips is effusive in her praise for Garland's talent), and in truth, nothing she could have done would probably have done much good, partial because it seems Garland had very little respect for Phillips, and because Garland may very well have been beyond saving at this point.

I can see this portrait as one small piece of who Garland was, and leave it at that. Interestingly enough, there is not an ounce of kindness to Phillips mentioned in this memoir from Garland. Selective memory? Certainly. It doesn't serve her narrative, and Phillips IS crafting a narrative here. So if something doesn't fit in with the picture she's trying to paint??? Leave it out. The reader is, after all, reading the account of someone who wants to set the record straight and have her say after a long silence. Stories of kindness would just muddy the waters.

The picture of Liza seems much closer to capital T truth. Of course, there's a much different context here. Phillips WAS Minnelli's agent, and she served her when she was on the way up, and could take partial credit in her rise. Phillips describes a girl who is guileless, naive, socially awkward, loved by her mother but barely parented, and loaded with talent.

Is it a page turner? Yes. Is it jaded and self serving? Yes, but all memoirs are self serving and prone to selective recollections. What I ultimately grew exhausted with was all the negativity. Not just in what was done to Phillips, but the negativity in her view of people, her interpretations of their motives, and her vindictiveness. Hollywood will do that to you, I suppose.

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## Julie says

Besides being crass and mean-spirited, the book needed a decent editor. This was just a slamfest against many celebrities but the one person who came out the worst was the author herself.

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## Lily says

This was damn juicy. WOW did Judy Garland have a depressing life! This memoir was written by Stevie Phillips, Judy's personal assistant cum enabler cum ambitious climber cum biggest fan. She really pulled no punches in describing herself as part of the problem, and shedding some very depressing light on an American treasure. I always knew about the constant pill-popping and her overall desperation, but I had no idea Judy was suicidal, and dabbled in self-immolation like burning and cutting, only when Stevie was around to save her. Stevie tells horrifying story after horrifying story-- Judy passing out onto a glass coffee table, cutting a deep gash across her face hours before a show, Judy throwing a friggin butcher knife at Stevie for allowing the doctor to take away all her pills, putting out fires both literal and figurative. The way that everyone around her treated her as this inhuman commodity! It was so painful to read. All she wants is for someone to love her for who she is, but they only love her for her talent! When Judy slit her wrist (also hours before a show), her lover/agent/svengali just instructs Stevie to go out and buy a thick bracelet. Dark.

Meanwhile, the Liza parts painted her as exactly the kind of waif-like, desperate for love and affection Pookie that we all think of her as. Poor Li! (as Stevie affectionately refers to her.) She didn't get nearly as much real estate in the book as Judy, maybe because Stevie was only her agent for a handful of years, but still, I would have loved some more stories from the set of Cabaret or The Sterile Cuckoo.

Apart from the Liza and Judy parts, I wasn't that into the rest of the anecdotes in this book. Save for a one-off mention of David Bowie, it was mostly relaying details of famous Hollywood deals Stevie made in the 60s and 70s, which frankly weren't that interesting to read about. And I wasn't that into her own career journey from wide-eyed lackey to ball-busting Hollywood agent. That's probably what dragged this down to a two star rating. I did find the Mad Men office culture to be especially repugnant and fascinating though.

Just closing in on those gaps in my Hollywood historical knowledge!

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## Spencer Blow says

overall 3, the part with Judy I give a 5. I don't know how much is true and how much is exaggerated, as is the case with any book on Judy's life, but the book definitely delivers an interesting glimpse into her world.

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## Jeff says

I'm a sucker. \$25 for self-indulgent, crass, tacky, bitter, icky schlock. I thought the book might have some new insight into Judy Garland, a subject that makes for an entire shelf of books in my apartment. Apparently, Stevie Phillips hasn't read any of them. Not only does she seem to believe that horror stories about Judy are news to anyone but she psychoanalyzes and summarizes them falsely.

Judy's addiction with amphetamines and sleeping pills began as a young girl when introduced to them by her mother, MGM studio doctors and fellow performers. This well documented fact somehow alluded Ms. Phillips all these years. She believes Judy turned to drugs and a alcohol as a result of her "addiction to pain," the author's phrase for a person drawn or addicted to depression....or something like that. Who knows. This may be true of Liza, also throughly trashed in the book, but not Judy.

The worst offense, however, is that someone at St. Martins Press thought that the trashing of celebrities combined with the autobiography of this poor dear, who treated her own severe depression by going to Al Anon meetings (bizarre, considering no drug or alcohol abuse was involved), would be interesting to anyone. It isn't.

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## **Leigh says**

Borderline meanspirited, tells stories that probably should have gone untold. I love a good celeb memoir but this one left me cold and disgusted.

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## **Mediaman says**

The first half is a fascinating inside look at the sad life of Judy Garland; the rest is incomplete details about somewhat bland associations the author has with a few other famous people but never enough to make it special. Overall it's worth reading for the shocking specifics about Garland repeatedly trying to take her own life and some of the still-alive famous people the author throws under the bus. But be prepared to go through many pages where almost nothing interesting happens and you want a lot more information.

Beyond the amazing details of the years spent along side Garland, how can the author be Liza Minelli's agent and give no details about the singer's career beyond mentioning a few credits? Readers would be interested in knowing how Oscar-winning Cabaret was negotiated and shot, but there's not one tidbit. How can the author eventually sign Robert Redford as a client but offer not one detail about any of the 3 or 4 times a day they talked together on the phone? She's the one that got him Butch Cassidy yet doesn't offer one detail about the making of that movie nor others. And there is one funny scene with her client David Bowie making out with a man in front of her, but beyond that she says nothing about the musician.

Her first husband is mostly ignored. Her second husband only gets a couple sentences. I think she had two children with him but the kids are such an aside I'm not sure (there's more about Judy Garland's kids in the book than about the author's children). Her third husband gets some pages near the end, maybe because he was a famous musician who took her for all she was worth in the divorce? But none of it is adequate for a memoir. She also ends the book back in the 1980s, with only a quick wrap-up that mentions a safari and mountain climbing expedition a long time ago. So what happened in the last 25 years of her life?

The book leaves no questions about Judy Garland--the woman was needy, manipulative, crazy, and self-destructive. Some of it is almost hard to believe. The book however leaves a lot of questions about Stevie Phillips, including why she put up with Garland's antics for years and where her inner lack of self-esteem came from while outwardly she was aggressive. While the author brags a lot about herself, tries to claim to have been a leader in the women's liberation movement, and includes a quick nod to Al-Anon near the end, she seems to have a difficult time understanding how self-destructive she was in the poor choices she made. It wasn't just the celebrities and studio heads that had major problems--while she spends the book focusing on them she fails to really see how she caused many of her own problems in life. It just reinforces how

people in the entertainment industry are out of touch with reality, immoral, selfish, abusive, and not to be admired.

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## **Russell Sanders says**

A legendary talent agent. One of the first women to crack the male-dominated agenting world. The personal handler of Judy Garland. The agent who first signed Liza. The agent who handled Robert Redford. What's not to like? Especially if you, like I, feed on show biz stories. So I hungrily began reading Stevie Phillips's memoir *Judy and Liza and Robert and Freddie and David and Sue and Me....* That's eight hours of my life I'll never get back. Half the book is her account of how she babysat Judy Garland as Judy worked to make a comeback late in her career. Garland, as has been widely reported, was drug-addled and insecure. But I firmly believe there are icons that we, mere mortals, don't want or need to know thoroughly. It's best that we not know the details of Liberace's homosexuality (after all, he lived in an era when being gay was not accepted, and he worked diligently to keep his "secret," one that was thinly veiled, but he was such a great performer, even those with deep-seated prejudices overlooked the reports about him; now, I must point out, he would most likely thrive being openly gay, but this is a different era); it's best we not know of Elvis's controlling personality, his drug use, his bizarre behavior; it's best we not know of Marilyn's extreme insecurities, and it's best we not know the deep details of JFK's affair with her. No, these are people whose legacies loom so large that we should revere them for their contributions to our lives and not have those memories sullied. Phillips, however, must not think this is so. She tells every sordid detail about Judy, and when she is through—although she wants us to believe she understands Judy's insecurities and motivations—the Judy Garland whom we all love is a little bit, or a lot, harder to love. Phillips does the same to a lesser degree with Liza and Al Pacino. As for her three marriages, she doesn't name names for the first two men—and, in fact, admits that she treated the first badly. But the third, film composer Dave Grusin, she not only names, but she trashes royally. And all the while, she paints herself as deserving of sympathy for her own peccadilloes, for after all, as she tells it, she did what she did because she was a woman in a man's world and wanted a career. That's admirable to an extent, but she totally lost me when she told of an affair she had with someone she despised. And yet, she managed, in her eyes, to justify her actions. The last section of the book is a lame attempt to wash herself clean by showing us she has been through a twelve-step program that showed her the light. Hogwash! What she has done is write a trashy book to further her bank account when her career is virtually over. I finished the book with no respect for the woman. One caveat: Phillips produced the Broadway production of *The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas*. I thoroughly enjoyed the two chapters about that experience, largely because there was no extreme drama, no backbiting, no tale-telling. Those two chapters were just accounts of what happened without rolling in any mud.

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## **Lorraine Hughes says**

Not even worth commenting on... :(

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## **Robin says**

At times interesting memoir with sad portrayals of Judy Garland and Liza Minnelli.

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