



Without Getting Killed or Caught: The Life and Music of Guy Clark

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Winner, 2016 the Belmont Book Award, Sponsored by the International Country Music Conference

For more than forty years, Guy Clark wrote and recorded unforgettable songs. His lyrics and melodies paint indelible portraits of the people, places, and experiences that shaped him. He has served as model, mentor, supporter, and friend to at least two generations of the world's most talented and influential singer-songwriters. In songs like "Desperados Waiting for a Train," "L.A. Freeway," "She Ain't Going Nowhere," and "Texas 1947," Clark's poetic mastery has given voice to a vision of life, love, and trouble that has resonated not only with fans of Americana music, but also with the prominent artists—including Johnny Cash, Ricky Skaggs, Jerry Jeff Walker, and others—who have recorded and performed Clark's music.

Now, in *Without Getting Killed or Caught: The Life and Music of Guy Clark*, writer, producer, and music industry insider Tamara Saviano chronicles the story of this legendary artist from her unique vantage point as his former publicist and producer of the Grammy-nominated album *This One's for Him: A Tribute to Guy Clark*. Part memoir, part biography, Saviano's skillfully constructed narrative weaves together the extraordinary songs, larger-than-life characters, previously untold stories, and riveting emotions that make up the life of this modern-day poet and troubadour.

Without Getting Killed or Caught: The Life and Music of Guy Clark Details

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From Reader Review Without Getting Killed or Caught: The Life and Music of Guy Clark for online ebook

Brandon Barrett says

I've been eagerly waiting for this book since I first heard it was in the works a couple of years ago. I was not disappointed, the book was fantastic. Tamara Saviano did a great job of interviewing those who knew Guy Clark best and combining that into a thorough biography of a great songwriter. I would have imagined Guy would be difficult to interview but it's clear that the author and he had a good rapport which made the book much more interesting. I highly recommend this to any fan of Guy Clark, and I suspect anyone who isn't a fan, will be one by the end of the book.

R.J. says

When Guy Clark died last month, Tamara Saviano was in the final stages of a multi-year biography project about the singer/songwriter.

Thank god.

The book hits shelves on Oct. 18 and digs deep into the life of one of the most influential artists you've probably never heard of. His songs are better known as hits for other people, including Jerry Jeff Walker, Jimmy Buffett, Johnny Cash... and most everybody else.

Rich in interviews with Guy and his wife Suzanna, Steve Earle, Lyle Lovett, Vince Gill and others, the book details the hard-scramble life of the singer as he moved from Texas to Los Angeles and eventually to Nashville. The life experiences that formed the songs, etc., set against the backdrop of the shifts in country music during the 70s, 80s and 90s (countrypolitan, the outlaw movement, the urban cowboy phase, the rise of Garth, etc.).

It's also an interesting chronicling of the weird, triangular love story of Guy, Suzanna and Townes Van Zandt.

Rising out of the same Texas dirt that gave us Willie Nelson, Billy Joe Shaver, Robert Earl Keen and others, Guy Clark is the genuine article, and this book captures that.

It's raw and unapologetic -- just like Guy.

Erik says

Thank you, Tamara Saviano, for writing what will stand as the definitive biography of Guy Clark (and also of Susanna Clark and Townes Van Zandt). I have new-found respect for Clark's songs, after reading the stories detailed in this book. I've always thought he is one of America's greatest songwriters, so I was pleased to read that his contemporaries think so too.

Rick Wright says

Great biography of one of my favorite American singer songwriters - Guy Clark.

Donna says

Without a doubt, this is the best biography of a musician/artist/songwriter I have ever read, and I've read quite a few. There is no question that Tamara Saviano knew and loved Guy Clark. She treats the story of his life and music with utmost respect and yet doesn't varnish any truths about his life, his marriage to Susanna, or his friendship with Townes Van Zandt. Having grown up in Houston myself, I loved the references to all of Guy's ties to our city and to Texas in general, many of which are special to me, as well. Tamara took such care to authenticate everything she wrote, and she included multitudes of photos, lyrics, interviews with Guy's family and the many musicians with whom he co-wrote, befriended and mentored over the years. By the time I finished this book, I felt like I knew Guy intimately myself. I also loved learning tidbits that I would never have known otherwise, such as the fact that Guy married his first wife in my childhood church, and that Susanna was born in a tiny Texas town where some of my family has lived for many years. Of course, those are personal references that others may not relate to, but they endeared me to the story of his life, and I'm sure there are enough other facts about his life included that anyone who reads the book will be fascinated as well. It's very well-written and kept me interested throughout. To be honest, I had the book for several months before I actually read it. I don't know how to explain that, as I was dying to get into it; I'd heard nothing but positive feedback on it. I think I was so afraid I was going to get part-way through it and not pick it up again because it wouldn't be as good or detailed as I wanted it to be. Sadly, I've done that with other books about musicians. I didn't need to worry. Once I started reading it, I was hooked. I did read it slowly, however. I didn't rush through it or skim over anything. I absorbed this book. I will probably read it again. No, I'm sure I will. It was so interesting and so chock full of insight into the kind of person that Guy was, that my heart actually hurt after I finished it, knowing that even though I probably heard him play in Houston or Austin when I was young, and I love so many of his songs, I'll never get to meet him in person. I highly recommend this book to anyone who loves Guy Clark's music and the music of other singer-songwriters, or just to anyone who wants to read a compelling story about the music scene and the evolution of Americana music in Texas and Nashville from the 60's to the present.

Jason Clarke says

This is a great personal telling of Guy Clark's story. I've always admired his songwriting.

I really like the way Ms. Saviano spends time talking about Guy's collaboration with many other songwriters. His way of finding a way into their stories to dig out the songs is pretty cool.

"Well, then. Let's write about that."

Mark says

I had a strange and beautiful dream last spring (Early April). I was at a small outdoor gathering under a tent (my grandmother had passed the previous week and the service was graveside so maybe that is context)... anyway... I sang "Dublin Blues" and Guy sang and played guitar with me. After I finished, he embraced me and would not release me... like a father or grandfather... he whispered words I can't remember but that I do know were deeply encouraging and spoken with deep affection. We both wept. I awoke from the dream with a most amazingly wonderful sense of gratitude and peace.

I never met Guy Clark... but I still endeavor to write a song he might like.

Brian Johannesen says

This is a good book for anyone to read. If you're a fan of Guy Clark, and I am a huge fan, it was an excellent read. A fitting tribute to a giant.

Tharen says

Thorough telling of Guy Clark's life, although the recitations of concerts performed and touring was a bit dry at times. We saw him when he came to the Beachland Ballroom in the early aughts, which was mentioned in the book. Guy's evolution as a songwriter, his negotiations with the music industry to do things his way, and the info on the start of the Americana movement was fascinating as were the stories behind many of the songs. But what stood out was his work as a mentor and collaborator with so many songwriters and musicians over the years. Saw one of them last night on the Americana Awards paying tribute. Steve Earle performed "Desperados Waiting for a Train" and it was a perfect follow-up to finishing the book.

Nick Kopsian says

If you know Guy Clark's music this is an essential read. If you don't know Guy Clark's music, what's wrong with you? Don't you like music?

This biography of Clark is a deep look into the life of one of the best songwriters ever. He is a fascinating and complicated man. I thought after reading this that someone could write a whole separate book on the relationships between Guy, his wife Suzanna, and Towns Van Zandt.

I suggest you have some of Guy's music handy as this book will make you want to listen to him.

Dan says

I enjoyed reading this book about the legendary Texas songwriter Guy Clark. It was well written and gave me a good picture of the man and his music. He touched a lot of people and the stories of his friends are very prominent in these pages. Most notably, his friendship with the great songwriter Townes Van Zandt comes alive. You could tell these guys loved writing songs and being friends. I have been listening to their music all week.

Rebecca says

This is an excellent biography of a talented singer-songwriter. I wish there were more about his process of songwriting, but I thoroughly enjoyed reading where some of the songs I love have their history. Highly recommended to fans of biography, as well as Guy Clark.

Maurice says

Tamara Saviano spent years working on her biography of Guy Clark, and the result is a book worthy of the great songwriter. There is a tremendous amount of research behind the book: many hours spent with Guy, his wife Susanna, Rodney Crowell, and many others who worked with Guy over the years. There are many insights into Guy's writing process and influences. Saviano dives deeply into exploring his relationships with Susanna Clark and Townes Van Zandt, and she doesn't shy away from the uncomfortable moments. The ending, which takes us past Guy's death to the subsequent celebrations of his life, is poignant. Highly recommended.

Mark Walker says

Wonderful expose

Good look at Guy Clark. Need to read again, as he aimed to be a poet and artist. His songs and his collaboration is so inspiring. Glad to read it. Well written.

Bob Schriever says

Without knowing it, I have been a Guy Clark fan for years. I've heard his songs done by other artists, only after he died did I listen to him. This book is a must read for any fan. Well written, detailed, it is a great insight into one of the best songwriters that ever came out of Texas or anywhere else for that matter. Read the book, listen to his music, let the little movies that his songs really are play out in your mind. Right now I have to go find my cape.
