



Crash and Burn

Artie Lange , Anthony Bozza

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Veteran comedian and radio personality Artie Lange turns an unflinching eye and his signature wit on his perilous descent through drugs and depression and ultimately, his recovery, in the follow-up to his hilarious debut memoir, #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Too Fat to Fish*. At a high point in his career, Artie Lange performed a sold-out show in Carnegie Hall—and he did it with a pocketful of heroin. In the midst of a deep, self-destructive depression, addicted to heroin, cocaine, and prescription drugs, he lashed out at everyone around him—from his cohosts on *The Howard Stern Show* to celebrity guests and even his longtime friends. Then came his legendary meltdown on-air, with 6 million people listening, after which Lange pulled himself together enough to go to a buddy's bachelor party in Amsterdam. He never made the party, but instead used the trip as an opportunity to hole up in his hotel room with a prostitute and do drugs.

By turns dark and harrowing, hilarious and poignant, and always drop-dead honest, *Crash and Burn* is a blow-by-blow account of Lange's years of addiction, a suicide attempt (which he relates in terrifying detail), hitting rock bottom, stints in rehab, and painful relapses. With the help and support of friends and family, Lange manages to recover and get his life and career back on track. And despite his slip-ups, backslides, and permanent losses, Artie Lange forges on.

From drugs to sports to falling in love, Lange tells all in *Crash and Burn*, the story of his life that is as shocking as it is funny, ever tempered by his characteristic humor, self-awareness, and inimitable way with words.

Crash and Burn Details

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From Reader Review Crash and Burn for online ebook

Jkhickel says

"Crash and Burn" is the best book I've ever read, by a drug addict, about being a drug addict.

We all know that addicts are liars. Artie Lange admits it. And he even admits, toward the end of the book, that he lied in the middle of the book! So I'm not sure I buy the "everything's starting to turn around for me now" ending. But, still, some truth seeps out. I've never heard this quote before, but it really gave me a sad chuckle:

When a normal person falls in a hole, he calls for a ladder. When an addict falls in a hole, he calls for an interior decorator, because he knows he's going to be down there for a while.

Artie really relates to his fellow comedians, such as Greg Giraldo and Mitch Hedberg, who died either through overdose or suicide. He doesn't mention Richard Jeni or Robin Williams, but the thought does occur: Are comedians prone to depression and suicide? Who knows? But I do have to agree with some of the other reviewers that Lange has, by his own admission, taken out his anger inappropriately on his assistants, managers of small comedy clubs out in the hinterlands, callers to the Stern show, and others of little consequence, while he is careful not to deliberately offend people in power positions, like Howard Stern, Robin Quivers and his agent. So maybe the problem isn't drugs, maybe Lange just doesn't like himself.

But unlike most autobiographies, Lange doesn't portray himself as a hero, or let himself off easy. In the end, he blames no one but himself. And for that unique perspective alone, this book is worth reading.

Tom says

An account of Artie Lange's addiction and struggle with alcohol and heroin; truly a self made hell that he was in. I'd like to wish Artie, along with his friends and fans the best of luck and a full recovery.

Andrew Hicks says

Andrew Hicks

You might remember Artie Lange from "The Howard Stern Show," *Dirty Work* with Norm Macdonald, very early "Mad TV" or his 2008 smash hit memoir *Too Fat To Fish*. This follow-up memoir skips most of the universal life lessons in favor of story after story of excessive drug and alcohol abuse.

Philip Gibbons

Essentially, *Crash and Burn* is the story of an addict who takes unbelievable luck and nice people (especially cops) for granted.

Andrew Hicks

This book was exhausting. The last half became an endurance challenge for me. So much play by play of so much bad behavior. At least *TFTF*'s timeline bounced around decades rather than 3 chronological years of

concentrated abuse.

Philip Gibbons

It was a rough read. I remember his attempted suicide in the news but being that up close and personal was different. The part where he chugged straight bleach was icing on the fucked cake.

Andrew Hicks

Chugged straight bleach then chased it by gutting his belly with a knife nine times straight. Holy crap. Low point of low points.

Philip Gibbons

Then the blood and vomit and broken glass. Artie is seriously fucked up. And a bit scary. I was hoping those last chapters would be about permanent sobriety and happiness. Then the hotel rage chapter happened.

Andrew Hicks

Yeah, that part where "sober" Artie dips deep into the hotel mini-bar. That reminded me of the old cliche where the horror movie killer comes back for one last big scare. *I had an epiphany. A breakthrough. I didn't need heroin. But when I got angry I needed two fifths of Jack Daniels.*

Philip Gibbons

This is a romantic lovey dovey pussy story about how much I love Adrienne. I don't care what you sa--SMASH SMASH DRINK DRINK RAGE SMASH PARANOIA DRINK TERRIFIED GIRLFRIEND.

Andrew Hicks

And this is the part where I attack my co-writer, Rolling Stone's Anthony Bozza, verbally and physically on the streets of Paris. But I eventually apologized, he's a nice guy, he actually wrote this sentence.

Philip Gibbons

Intern Teddy fucked up again. I yelled and screamed at him. But, come on, he made me really angry. He'd make you angry too. Teddy was a fuckup. He was annoying. Teddy's a nice kid.

Andrew Hicks

Any boss in the world would fire Teddy on sight. Horrible employee. I'd take a bullet for him.

Philip Gibbons

Who calls Bloomingdale's "Bloomie's"? What are you, gay, Teddy? I love you.

Andrew Hicks

Artie Lange does not like gay people, says Artie Lange about a hundred times in this book. This is a 300-page anti-resume that screams, "Don't hire me!" and a personals ad that screams, "I'm gonna shoot up and hit ya, bitch!"

Philip Gibbons

So many of his jokes and similes fell flat, too. A lot of the humor fizzled.

Andrew Hicks

The tone kept shifting back and forth, and some jokes I skipped right over, not even acknowledging them as jokes in my head cuz they sucked. Other times I found myself snickering out loud. The similes were 50/50. I liked all the '70s pop culture references.

Philip Gibbons

It's hard to sympathize with him, too. At his worst, he keeps lucking out with friendly cops and traffic accident plaintiffs. He can get out of any situation by signing autographs.

Andrew Hicks

Yeah, didn't he ever nod out on heroin and rear end a vehicle whose driver thought *Dirty Work* was a waste of \$8.50?

Philip Gibbons

Who'd have thought Colin Quinn would be the guy to finally muscle Artie into rehab? Everyone else in the world was an enabler.

Andrew Hicks

It is amazing but at the same time I'm amazed by how much I got away with as an out of control drinker. And everybody is right about, the person will stop at nothing until they're ready. Nothing you can do there except maybe manipulate their livelihood and access. Still, that's why I read books like this, to give myself that feeling of:

- 1) THIS is why you stay sober
- 2) You could've got in a lot deeper and did shit that was a whole lot worse.

Philip Gibbons

Crash and Burn is like being trapped in a fucked-up person's head for 300 pages. I kept rooting for him to get better, but he ended the book just as bad off. He has the potential to be a sweet guy, but it's like there's no winning for him.

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*NOTE: This is the second Andrew Hicks/Philip Gibbons review collaboration. For further reading, check out their take on Corey Feldman's *Coreyography*.*

Billy says

Where "Too Fat To Fish" was more of a proper autobiography, "Crash and Burn" is a memoir of a few recent dark years in Artie's life during which his battles with drugs and alcohol reach "shock and awe" intensity. For the most part, each chapter is a separate story detailing a point in time where he slipped further down the mountain of success; each chapter, another face plant on a boulder as he plummets toward rock bottom. Culminating in his well-publicized suicide attempt, this book also details his long recovery period, relapses, episodes of self-loathing, and his ultimate decision to embrace life, leading to the revitalization of his career and the rekindling of a romance that almost ended before it had a chance to start. It's harrowing and cringe-worthy reading at times, but Artie's uncanny knack for telling stories combined with his self-deprecating sense of humor keeps it a compelling and quick read. My only criticism is that occasionally the book gets a little long-winded in providing a backstory for whatever tale Artie's spinning at the time, but eventually he gets to the point, and the payoff is usually worth the wait. Fans of the Baby Gorilla won't want to miss this.

Michelle says

I have been a loyal Howard Stern Show listener since 1998 and the Artie Lange years were, in my opinion, the best there were. Artie was a great addition to the show but hearing his downward spiral play out on air was so sad. I was upset when he disappeared from the show and when I heard that he had attempted suicide, my heart dropped. I read this book because I wanted to know what happened to him. What I got was a trip into the mind of an addict, which is not an easy thing to step into. But I was grateful, because there is an addict in my life, and Artie's stories confirmed so many things for me—mostly the extent to which an addict will lie.

It's hard to say that I enjoyed this book—you'd have to be really messed up to say that. But I learned what happened to him, from his perspective, and gained some insight along the way. It's not an award-winning piece of literature and literary snobs could tear it apart—but it was written in the same way Artie would tell a story. So if you are familiar with hearing Artie tell stories, you should be ok with reading this. I did find it hard to follow at times. The timeline jumps around and there is some redundancy in the information, and there were occasions when I zoned out. The last leg of the book was particularly rough to get through. I hadn't expected it to go on for as long as it did after the suicide attempt. However, I was glad I stuck with it to the end.

Artie has a lot of amazing stories. His life is a mess, and this book throws you right into it. I won't criticize the writing because I didn't read it expecting great literature. I read it expecting to find out his side of the story, and that's what I got.

Nicholas Hanawalt says

Amazing story of addiction and relapse and recovery from one of the great comedians of our time

David Horney says

i used to be a fan. this book cured me of that. his first book was an extended suicide note. this one is just full of posturing bullshit about how badly he treated anyone who ever cared about him. there is no sense of real remorse or understanding how truly awful he was to those who love him. he strives to be self deprecating and amusing, but simply comes across as a self involved ass.

Masooch says

I'm amazed I finished the book. The man does have some severely deep rooted psychological issues, but the entire time I'm reading, I'm just angry. I can't believe I ever found him empathetic, or funny. I don't understand how he keeps getting offered such amazing opportunities in life while being such a prick. Its show-boating at its grandest. I kept feeling like he was writing what we-as readers/fans- would expect him to say, but his sincerity fell flat, his jokes just mean-spirited.

Solitairerose says

I liked Artie Lange on the Howard Stern show. He was funny and brought a “regular guy” persona to the show that worked well with Howard’s neurotic narcissist and Robin’s self-important blowhard personalities. Being a fan of the show, I knew about his drug issues, and when I read his first autobiography, you got to know where he came from and how he became the guy we got to know on the show, both good and bad. When he left the show after a suicide attempt, it put into stark highlight that no, this wasn’t a “regular guy.” It was a guy who, like many other comedians and comedy actors, loved John Belushi and followed him down that same self-destructive path. “Too Fat To Fish” told the story of Artie drug use, but mixed it in with funny stories and the type of asides that he used to pepper the Stern show with. Crash and Burt, doesn’t. It tells the story of his fall into drugs, how he lost everything and his slow, halting recovery.

There’s aren’t any funny anecdotes. Oh, there are stories that might appear funny if not for the fact that the situation all stemmed from his drug abuse and his spiral into depression. This is a DARK book, and the few glimmers of light are tentative as Artie goes through in detail the depths he went through to feed his addiction, how his attempts to climb out of the hole he created fell apart and even the end is a plea for help and understanding. This is not a book for someone looking for a “feel good” recovery story.

The writing style betrays how the book came about: It reads just like Artie telling stories to a ghostwriter, and then as he goes over the manuscript, adding apologies and regrets after each one. It’s a hard read, but I am glad I read it, even if just to find out what happened to this man who I was and am a fan of.

More of an interview than a book, this one is pretty much a “fans only” book, as there is no real resolution. There is a section at the end about how Artie was able to get back one of the parts of his life he lost during his addiction and some stories about his career after coming back, but it’s clear that it’s all very tentative and his demons are still present.

Michael Brown says

Listening to Artie over the years on the Howard Stern Show was an exercise in contradictions. His 8-year tenure as sidekick on one of the most raw and open daily broadcasts of comedy was a constant reminder to me of how little real, unfiltered comedy there was in most of contemporary American media.

Then, in December 2009, Artie disappeared from the show with little explanation. I remember listening to the Stern show when it returned from holiday in January 2010, and the crew totally acted like Artie didn’t exist. It was so strange to hear, especially for a show that was so honest.

Now, we finally have the full understanding as to why that was. In 300 fast-moving, emotional and angst-filled pages, Artie Lange bears all to those superfans among us who have been waiting for a breakdown of what really happened. The book unfolds with Artie’s attempted suicide near the middle of the book, with the previous pages explaining what led to his heart-wrenching drug-induced meltdown as he careened toward his abrupt departure from the Stern show, and the pages after illustrating his slow but steady climb out of this destructive time. The book reads with the same pseudo-illiterateism and frankness that made Artie so endearing. His trademark photographic memory lends plenty of great stories about those in his life, from his bumbling assistant (and Stern show staffer) Teddy, to his close friends, to his mother and sister, for whom his life became a cause as much as an element of their own, to Stern and fellow sidekick Robin Quivers, who

acted as much as close friends as associates.

Those of us who are fans of the Stern show know that the show has not been the same since Lange left, with many of us feeling as though there was a soul in the dialogue that has been absent for several years now. "Crash and Burn" reminds us of the depth that Lange brought, his comedy as creative conveyance of the flawed humanity that we all carry but seldom articulate. I'll tell you this much: I'm going to find his new radio show and try again to listen to it. I realize after finishing this book what a unique and wonderful entertainer and person Artie is, and how much I miss listening to him. I cannot wait for the third book in this epoch.

Jeff says

I won this book through a Goodreads giveaway.

Full disclosure: I am a person in recovery, so my views correlate to Artie's.

Artie Lange is a comedian from New Jersey, who has appeared in a few films, but is mostly known as one of the sidekicks of radio personality Howard Stern. Artie is also a drug addict, and this volume recounts the last few years of his life as an active addict.

I thoroughly enjoyed this book. It was a hard to put down read, a very compelling story of Artie's last years of drug use. I remember in school learning about Greek tragedies. The professor said that those old stories are always about kings or royalty as opposed to "blue collar" folk because people "up high" always have a greater height to fall. Artie Lange had everything -- a good career in show business, a job on a much beloved (and, by some, much reviled) radio comedy show, the love of a good woman, a loving family, an apartment overlooking the Manhattan skyline, and millions of dollars. From all appearances, Mr. Lange was a successful entertainer.

When this book starts, Artie is sort of in the middle of his descent. He was snorting heroin and snorting opiates, plus drinking mass quantities. He started acting as an out of control narcissist, fueled by his addiction, and he couldn't (or wouldn't) see how his actions were hurting the people in his life. His drug use make him act in ways that were not in his best interest, such as nodding off on the air on the Howard Stern show.

In December 2009, Artie hit bottom, and the next month he attempted suicide. Unfortunately for Mr. Lange, he stayed at the bottom for about two years, until he slowly started the uphill climb of his recovery.

Most of this book was very readable, and written in an easy, conversational style. Some of his jokes are very good (if that humor is to your taste), and his accounts are sometimes harrowing, sort of like a modern day "Lost Weekend".

Unfortunately, the last two or three chapters stopped the narrative cold. They became a drag to read. Artie goes into an overlong description of his trip to Paris where he started drinking again, and how he met his music hero Bruce Springsteen. I think these last chapters could have used less detail.

This memoir also reminded me that not all addiction stories have an happy ending. Artie was certainly close

to being remembered in the same vein as John Belushi and Chris Farley. Sadly, the list of famous, talented, rich, and intelligent alcoholics and drug addicts who died from their addictions extends infinitely.

I give this book four stars, but it doesn't get the fifth star because of the last few chapters.

I wish Mr. Lange wellness, health, love, kindness, compassion and grace and thank him for his searing honesty.

Jeremy Maddux says

Artie Lange has supplied me with over 500 hours of entertainment when I'd tune in to Howard Stern's show. I remembered him from his short stint on Mad TV and the legendary 'pig suit incident' in which he left the set to snort cocaine off of his car keys. Still, it was Stern's show where I discovered Artie Lange's existence.

His first biography, *Too Fat To Fish*, is the only autobiography to date that I have ever reread. Let's be honest. Every account of drug addiction is a 'harrowing odyssey' and a 'journey into one man's personal hell', but I liked that Artie never lost the ability to laugh at himself. He shouldn't, being a comedian.

Crash and Burn picks up at the height of Lange's success on the Stern show, where he frequently fell asleep on the air, got into fist fights with everyone from High Pitched Mike to his personal assistant, Teddy, and he was taking so much Subutex to cancel out a Fentanyl IV drip. He takes us through all the mechanics of giving up, the lost soul thoughts which permeated his every waking endeavor.

I remember the exact passage where this memoir turned a corner. It was when Artie Lange elaborated on the stereotype many have of comedians, the 'tears of a clown' cliche. For many comedians, he attests, that's the truth. Look at Mitch Hedberg, Lenny Bruce, John Belushi, Chris Farley, Sam Kinison, George Carlin, all dark, depressed, morbid, macabre, smug, dour, chain smoking, shadowy figures full of existential despair and hubris. Everyone loved Artie and wanted him to defeat his demons, but I know from experience it's difficult when you think the demons are your best friends.

My favorite part of the book is when Artie recounts his adventures doing standup at the Playboy Mansion. He slipped and fell, tearing the ass crack of his jeans so he could feel the cold night air on them. He bought forty percocets in a ziploc bag and proceeded to munch down on them, chase them with scotch, and tap into Sarah Silverman's inner bitch over at the monkey cages. Truly a memorable relaying here of Artie's soaring highs and bass-note lows.

Drew says

I'm a big Artie fan and I loved *Too Fat to Fish*, so I jumped into his new one here, face first. I feel sorry for Artie, he suffers from acute procrastination, addiction and rage. Some of the stories here confirm that he is his own worst enemy. You would think that his suicide attempt early in 2010 was his wake-up call, his rock bottom moment, but he's relapsed a time or two since. I want to say that by the end, Artie has closure, but he acknowledged that his demons are much too strong. He's engaged now and has a hit radio/TV show--but I

can't help but notice that the things that make most people happy--success, money, a true love, family, good friends, a satisfying career--these things will always be minimized by Artie's addicted brain. He knows how to say the right things, but believing them is another story. I hope in the next book, Artie will find the peace he deserves. But for now, it's one day at a time.

Lee Anne says

This is like A Million Little Pieces if it were actually true. Howard Stern Show listeners, such as myself, were of course dying to know what happened when Artie left the show in a swirl of suicide stories and mystery back in 2009 (!--four years ago). This tells all, and it's pretty brutal.

My only concern is the huge amount of anger Artie still carries around. When he recounts the Teddy story (he got into a on-air fight with his assistant and stormed out of the studio), he still has to take as many cheap shots at Teddy as he can work in (and more, when he tells an awful story of doing stand-up at the Playboy Mansion). At the end of the book, he goes off on a tirade about the "one percent" of his so-called friends who, according to him, went beyond abandoning him to screwing him over when he was in the depths of his addiction and depression, saying more than once that he'd kill them if it were legal. Anyone filled with this much rage is not healed of his demons, and I worry about his continued sobriety.

Ah, what do I know? But like most Stern fans, I have listened for so long that I feel like I have a personal stake in their stories. So I'll end it the way Crazy Alice would: Fuck you, Artie. With love.

Scott Foshee says

One Day at a Time

I'm not sure what to think about this book. I enjoyed Artie Lange's first book "Too Fat to Fish," and this has some of the same elements, but it then dives into Artie's dark self-destructive side and his struggle to recover from alcoholism and heroin addiction. It is a very admirable effort and it takes a special person to strip away all his defenses for us to see into the mind and behavior of an addict. The thing that bothers me about this book though are the layers of lies he repeatedly tells his family and friends about his addiction, while expecting us as readers to believe that now he really is telling the truth. *SPOILER ALERT* I became skeptical during his description of his now famous self-stabbing incident, which he says merely was his attempt to find sleep. Then at the end Artie tells us he really didn't come clean with us as readers either, and that he really did try to kill himself (his second suicide attempt). *END SPOILER ALERT* I appreciate how hard it must have been for him to go public with such a revelation, but it made me wonder what else in the book he wasn't telling the truth about.

The book does have some humorous moments. One particularly funny episode involves what Artie calls one of the worst gigs of his career, at the Playboy Mansion. He rips his slacks during the set, and gets angry with his assistant for being distracted by Sarah Silverman. When he finally finds him, Artie berates his assistant and says, "I need drugs and pants!" As you can imagine, the night at that point goes from bad to worse.

We follow Artie through four rehabs, where he repeatedly checks himself out and starts using again almost immediately. We see him throw away relationship after relationship only to hear him say how he regretted it,

got it back, and threw it away again. We see him abuse the love and trust of his family and friends only to say how sorry he is and then we see him do it to them again. And again. In many ways it is a very difficult book to read and to get through, and then our reward at the end is to be told that he has been lying to us too?

Again, it is hard to know what to think of this book, other than to view it as a glimpse into the chaotic, conflicted mind of an addict. He knows the right things to say, but meaning to do something and actually doing it are two separate things. He says he regrets his actions, but it just doesn't ring true, coming across more as self-absorbed and somewhat mean-spirited. I wish him luck, and in the words of Bruce Springsteen "Great good fortune," but he is a master manipulator and I get the feeling that we should proceed with caution, one day at a time.
