

Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius

By Steven Roby, Brad Schreiber



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Becoming Jimi Hendrix traces “Jimmy’s” early musical roots, from a harrowing, hand-to-mouth upbringing in a poverty-stricken, broken Seattle home to his early discovery of the blues to his stint as a reluctant recruit of the 101st Airborne who was magnetically drawn to the rhythm and blues scene in Nashville. As a sideman, Hendrix played with the likes of Little Richard, Ike and Tina Turner, the Isley Brothers, and Sam & Dave—but none knew what to make of his spotlight-stealing rock guitar experimentation, the likes of which had never been heard before.

From 1962 to 1966, on the rough and tumble club circuit, Hendrix learned to please a crowd, deal with racism, and navigate shady music industry characters, all while evolving his own astonishing style. Finally, in New York’s Greenwich Village, two key women helped him survive, and his discovery in a tiny basement club in 1966 led to Hendrix instantly being heralded as a major act in Europe before he returned to America, appeared at the Monterey Pop Festival, and entered the pantheon of rock’s greatest musicians.

Becoming Jimi Hendrix is based on over one hundred interviews with those who knew Hendrix best during his lean years, more than half of whom have never spoken about him on the record. Utilizing court transcripts, FBI files, private letters, unpublished photos, and U.S. Army documents, this is the story of a young musician who overcame enormous odds, a past that drove him to outbursts of violence, and terrible professional and personal decisions that complicated his life before his untimely demise.



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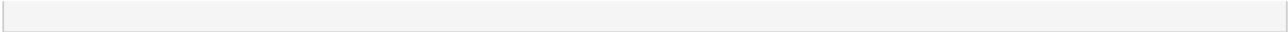
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- Sales Rank: #477970 in Books
- Published on: 2010-08-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .75" w x 6.00" l, .81 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 304 pages

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Editorial Review

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As a boy growing up in Seattle, Jimi Hendrix and his guitar were inseparable. He even slept with it. And when his father objected to the young boy playing left-handed—the elder Hendrix called it the devil’s work—Jimi learned to play right-handed upside down without changing the strings. These are the kind of details one learns in Roby and Schreiber’s entertaining biography, which follows Hendrix from his troubled childhood in Seattle, his disastrous stint in the army (he refused to conform to regulations), and on to New York and London, where he died under rather mysterious circumstances. From his earliest days as a sideman in various bands, Hendrix was different, creating weird wailing sounds on his guitar, which often got him fired. They also examine his dark side; despite his typically gentle demeanor, Hendrix had a violent streak. When the black community rejected both his music and his flamboyant style of dress, Hendrix spent more time in Greenwich Village, where, inspired by the success of another iconoclast, Bob Dylan, he found acceptance. An insightful look at an iconic star. --June Sawyers

Review

TheRoot.com, 11/4/10

“For a reader's first exploration into Hendrix's early years, Steven Roby and Brad Schreiber's well-researched book provides a solid start... What this book does well is bring a legend down to earth, if only so that readers can, 40 years after his untimely passing, better understand from whence he came.”

Houston Press (“Get Lit” blog), 11/22/10

“The authors contribute plenty of valuable and insightful stories about the music, moods, and outlook of perhaps rock's most inventive guitarist.”

Waterbury Sunday Republican, 12/5/10

“A worthy addition to the growing shelf of books on the man who redefined the role of electric guitar in rock music.”

Curled Up with a Good Book, 12/21/10

“For hardcore Hendrix fans, it's worth reading.”

Blues Revue, February 2011

“Stories about the chitlin’ circuit experiences, about losing head cutting contests in Nashville to Johnny Jones, about not getting paid, and of course, about the young women who helped the sometimes-homeless Jimi to survive make this book come alive. The 25 black-and-white photographs offered here are fantastic and most of them never seen before...A very enjoyable book.”

“A compelling account of an artist whose idiosyncrasies earned him both respect and scorn in the black music establishment and eternal superstardom in the rock arena...Roby and Schreiber provide an insightful account of an artist who perceived his craft differently from any guitarist before or since, and who finally aligned the rock world with that perception, but never fully reaped the rewards of his efforts.”

***JimPress*, September 2010**

"If you read only one new Hendrix book this year, make it this one...You will still be drawn in and fascinated to hear how Jimi became the showman and musician that he did."

Internet Review of Books, 10/29/10

"A must read for hard-core Hendrix fans."

Popmatters.com, 11/11/10

"The first major fleshing out of the formative period during which Hendrix discovered not only who he was, but who he wasn't...Roby and Schreiber document a remarkably busy and pivotal stretch in Hendrix's career and life. Their digging through files, interviews and news clippings puts meat on the bones of his pre-fame chronology."

***L.A. Weekly*, 9/23**

"A crucial rock bio."

***Chicago Sun-Times*, 9/19**

"Steven Roby and Brad Schreiber's assiduously reported work illuminates the evolution of Hendrix from self-taught amateur to the guitar paragon whose stylings remain a rock hallmark... [They] seem to have tracked down almost everybody who crossed paths with Hendrix... [and] are to be thanked for a comprehensive bibliography, recommended listening, a sessionography including discography and TV appearances, and a chronology of 1961-1966 tours and events."

Wolfgang's Vault, Ben Fong-Torres

"A well-researched book loaded with great stories."

***Mojo*, November 2010**

"One of the most intelligent and revealing biographies of an unsurpassable giant."

***San Francisco Chronicle*, 10/04/10**

***New York Times Book Review*, 10/17/10**

"Hendrix's career as a superstar has been well chronicled; the more interesting details of how he became one are told here...[*Becoming Jimi Hendrix*] makes a case for the preparation that every originator should go through: follow your passion obsessively, so that when you encounter the person or thing that will change your life, you'll be ready."

Steve Coates, *New York Times*, 10/15/10

"It's a fascinating book for the story it tells, but I would pay the cover price just for its amazing photographs."

***Rolling Stone*, 8/19/10**

3 ½ out of 4 stars "Most important, the book shows how Greenwich Village was crucial to Hendrix's 1966 breakthrough: With Harlem unable to hold him, MacDougal Street provides the launching pad for Hendrix's psychedelic genius."

***Classic Rock* (UK), September 2010**

“[A] unique and fascinating book...The most thorough account yet seen of the years during which a shy, spacey, chronically untogether young guitarist learned his craft...Tells us more, and more deeply, than any previous volume about exactly what went into his Becoming Jimi Hendrix.” (9 out of 10 stars)

Booklist, 9/15/10

“An insightful look at an iconic star.”

Midwest Book Review, January 2011

“A key acquisition of any rock music history holding.”

Examiner.com, 2/9/11

“Well-written and chock full of the kind of new information and original interviews that make it a joy (and even a relief, given the regurgitated nature of so many recent books on Hendrix) to a Jimi-obsessive.”

LosingToday.com, 5/22/11

“Well researched and well written, and the authors do a tremendous job of bringing both the subject and the era back to life for a whole new generation. Highly recommended.”

About the Author

Steven Roby wrote *Black Gold: The Lost Archives of Jimi Hendrix*. He lives in San Rafael, California.

Brad Schreiber is an award-winning journalist, screenwriter and literary consultant. His books include *Stop the Show!*, *What Are You Laughing At*, and *Death in Paradise*.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Carol Smith:

Book is to be different for each grade. Book for children till adult are different content. As it is known to us that book is very important for people. The book *Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius* seemed to be making you to know about other understanding and of course you can take more information. It is rather advantages for you. The publication *Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius* is not only giving you much more new information but also to be your friend when you really feel bored. You can spend your spend time to read your e-book. Try to make relationship with the book *Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius*. You never truly feel lose out for everything if you read some books.

Dana Vinson:

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Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius can be one of your starter books that are good idea. We all recommend that straight away because this reserve has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in terminology, easy to understand, bit entertaining but nonetheless delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to set every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Becoming Jimi Hendrix: From Southern Crossroads to Psychedelic London, the Untold Story of a Musical Genius although doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest as well as based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can drawn you into brand new stage of crucial imagining.

Annamarie Hernandez:

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