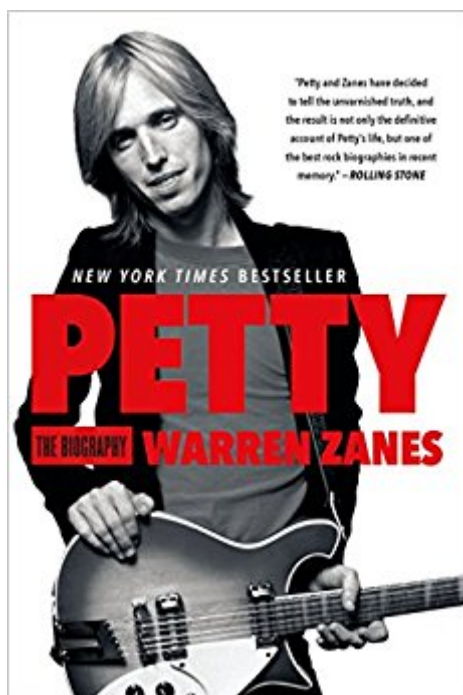


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# Petty: The Biography



## Synopsis

The New York Times Bestseller\*One of Rolling Stone's 10 Best Music Books of 2015\*An exhilarating and intimate account of the life of music legend Tom Petty, by an accomplished writer and musician who toured with PettyNo one other than Warren Zanes, rocker and writer and friend, could author a book about Tom Petty that is as honest and evocative of Petty's music and the remarkable rock and roll history he and his band helped to write.Born in Gainesville, Florida, with more than a little hillbilly in his blood, Tom Petty was a Southern shit kicker, a kid without a whole lot of promise. Rock and roll made it otherwise. From meeting Elvis, to seeing the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, to producing Del Shannon, backing Bob Dylan, putting together a band with George Harrison, Dylan, Roy Orbison, and Jeff Lynne, making records with Johnny Cash, and sending well more than a dozen of his own celebrated recordings high onto the charts, Tom Petty's story has all the drama of a rock and roll epic. Now in his mid-sixties, still making records and still touring, Petty, known for his reclusive style, has shared with Warren Zanes his insights and arguments, his regrets and lasting ambitions, and the details of his life on and off the stage.This is a book for those who know and love the songs, from "American Girl" and "Refugee" to "Free Fallin'" and "Mary Jane's Last Dance," and for those who want to see the classic rock and roll era embodied in one man's remarkable story. Dark and mysterious, Petty manages to come back, again and again, showing us what the music can do and where it can take us.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Petty and Zanes have decided to tell the unvarnished truth, and the result is not only the definitive

account of Petty's life, but one of the best rock biographies in recent memory." — Rolling Stone — "Imagine a long ride on the tour bus with Tom and the Heartbreakers where everyone was feeling loose enough to tell all their stories. What a historic night that would be. This book is that." — Eddie Vedder "This fascinating biography of Tom Petty was written by someone who deeply understands the rock n roll life and the creative personalities it takes to create this classic music. I wish Warren Zanes could write a biography about everyone I admire."

— Judd Apatow — "Warren Zanes' writing is definitive and thrilling, filled with hidden corners and inspiring truths... as soaring and soulful as the great journey of Petty himself." — Cameron Crowe — "Tom Petty is a human-sized rock star, an ordinary guy from Florida who quietly amassed an indelible body of work, and created one of rock and roll's greatest and most durable bands along the way. In this deeply engaging and highly readable biography, Warren Zanes not only illuminates the enigmatic man behind the songs, but he captures the human drama of being in a rock band as well as anyone who's ever written on the subject."

— Tom Perrotta — "This amazing book is a Tom Petty biography (and it's great on that account) but it's far more than that. It's an X-ray of the most fragile, most volatile, and most sublime social unit ever invented: the rock-and-roll band. The alliances, the distortions, the deep bruises and the absurd elations that can never be explained to an outsider. Sure, Petty is a book about a rock band but it's really a book about being human - how we meet and collaborate, break up and make up, learn to trust (or not) and, once in a lucky while, sing as loud as we can. It's a masterpiece." — Stephen Dubner — "Expertly researched and deeply felt, Petty is also the first peer-to-peer biography: the life of one musician through the eyes of a man who has prowled the same stages and chased the same dream. Warren Zanes tells his tale in a voice that is crisp and passionate, sympathetic, unsparing, and shot through with hard experience."

— Peter Ames Carlin — "With insight and rigor, Warren Zanes digs into the brilliance and ambition that have driven Tom Petty's magnificent career. Zanes gets deep inside Petty's life and songs, but perceptively, he pays special attention to the fierce tenacity required to maintain the complex organism known as a rock & roll band." — Alan Light, author of *The Holy or the Broken: Leonard Cohen, Jeff Buckley and the Unlikely Ascent of "Hallelujah"* "If you're interested in the structure of a band, in that world, this book is the Citizen Kane of rock and roll."

— Andrew Loog Oldham, manager and producer of The Rolling Stones from 1963-1967 "Marvelous, kinetic, funny, and if you'll pardon me, heartbreaking...Zanes is never less than entertainingly artful and sometimes breathtakingly graceful...The author's most impressive feat may be the way he assiduously avoids the salaciousness and grime that often

accompany these kinds of tales, and the candor he was able to elicit from his subject...Electrifying but never flashy and always in service of the song. Zanes tells the story with artful brevity and a keen sense of the necessary." *Boston Globe* "A thorough, well-written, and expansive...look at the life and career of one of America's most enduring and true post-1960s rock stars. More than any other source, this book digs deep... Petty is likely to stand as the definitive work." *Houston Press* "A biography of a reticent musician that will allow even his biggest fans to see him with fresh eyes and hear him with fresh ears.... Zanes brings a depth and empathy to the narrative that never veers toward sensationalism... Though it attests to the artist's singularity, this incisive, illuminating biography also serves as an elegy to one of the golden eras of the classic rock band-of the days when 'a band was everything, a shield and a shelter.' *Kirkus (Starred Review)* "[A] balanced chronicle of Petty's career with the detached delivery of a seasoned journalist combined with the intimacy of a friend bold enough to dig deep beneath the surface of his own personal musical hero...required reading for fans. Zanes's working knowledge of band dynamics, in conjunction with his crisp and concise writing, undeniably qualify him to tell this story of one of rock's most reclusive superstars. *Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)*" Warren Zanes's exceptional rock-bio Petty is loaded with compelling characters. Petty is the star of this book, obviously. But the hustlers and disgruntled band members; hometown haters and kinfolk; wives and ex-wives; famous friends and fiercely loyal employees Zanes introduces us to all play a significant role in the story of the man responsible for some of the most enduring music of our time." *Salon* "Zanes peels back the cool-guy exterior to become the first person to delve into Petty's life story, making for a marvelous read|so rich and thorough that it doesn't leave much room for complaints or nitpicking. It's a great piece of writing by any measure, but as far as rock bios go, this is tops. *Consequence of Sound* "If you're into Petty, or the inner workings of the life of any major talent who managed to get to the top and influence the music of a generation, this book needs to be on your winter reading list. *American Songwriter* "For Petty fans who've wondered about the artist behind the music, this book functions like a door being thrown open on the singer's musical and personal lives. Expect eager readers from rock fans." *Booklist* "An intimate and insightful portrait that can come only from a genuine insider." *Oakland Press*

Warren Zanes holds a PhD in visual and cultural studies from the University of Rochester. He was a member of the Del Fuegos, and continues to record music. His work has appeared in *The Oxford*

American, and he has served as a V.P. at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and is currently the Executive Director of Steven Van Zandt's Rock and Roll Forever Foundation.

I'll risk sounding like a loser and just admit that I wasn't super into Tom Petty before reading this book. Sure, I know (and enjoy) his big hits like anyone else, but not much beyond that. I basically started this book with a clean slate, more curious than anything else, and really just looking to learn. Well, after finishing the biography, I can say with all honesty that I am now a legitimate Tom Petty fan. I have enormous respect for the man. I really had no idea he had been through so much. I never knew his father used to beat the sh\*t out of him for years--but then turned around and mooched off of his son's success for the rest of his life. It never registered for me how hard Petty worked to get where he is. Truly, his work ethic is admirable. While it seems that his family life suffered for it, I am still a bit in awe that he has remained so focused and determined to succeed after decades in the business. It's respectable. And yet, despite the fact that he has been so successful, he's also surprisingly humble. He says many times that he was never in it for the money. He always dreamed of living comfortably, sure--paying rent on time, etc., etc.--but he never got sidetracked by a huge payday. His heart was always in the music. That became even more obvious to me when I went back and really listened to his music. While reading the book, I played most of the tracks author Zanes highlighted in the book. And I felt like I heard something new in these songs. I noticed the layers to the lyrics and the creativity in the sounds of American Girl, Listen to Her Heart, Insider, You Don't Know How It Feels, and others. It was just crazy to me how much I got out of these songs after I knew a bit more about the artist. One last thing...I also want to mention how impressed I was by Petty's oldest daughter, Adria. While reading, I could tell that she had experienced a lot of pain, especially after watching her parents divorce and then having to essentially raise her younger sister. But she seemed very strong to me--and surprisingly insightful. I looked forward to hearing her perspective on her dad. She added something special to this story. At any rate, I loved this book. I don't even normally like biographies that much--just because they tend to be so dry, ugh--but Zanes managed to write this one with a lot of heart. I finished it and felt legitimately connected to Petty and his music. It was a wonderful read.

PETTY: THE BIOGRAPHY is a superior example of its kind for two big reasons. One, author Warren Zanes had near-complete access to virtually every major player in the Tom Petty story, going back to Petty's childhood. That's rare in rock bios, which tend to be spotty primarily because key players refuse to be interviewed or are never approached for interviews. (The

only omission here: Jane, Petty's first wife.) Two, Zanes is a musician himself, from the late eighties college-rock band Del Fuegos strikes the right balance between being a Petty fan and being a Petty fanboy. That is to say, his affection and admiration don't get in the way of offering cogent critical analyses of Petty's work relative to Petty's physical and mental state at any given time. Also, the writing is a cut above the usual colorless hack-for-hire fare that marks many rock bios. The takeaway is a sympathetic, empathetic, never blind-eyed portrait of a complicated musical genius with a great many flaws. A thoroughly absorbing, entertaining, easygoing read.

It's about time somebody wrote the full story on one of the great American songwriters and bands of all time. Having a hard time putting it down. It's nice to hear the back story on all those great songs. I want to thank Warren Zanes for doing his homework and sharing this story with the rest of us.

This book didn't just show the glamour of the Rock and roll lifestyle. It showed the frustration of trying to make a dream come true. This book got into the nitty gritty and the real life experiences of the band members and their relationships. Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers certainly paid their dues and deserve the success they have achieved. Good read.

Great read! The TP story is one of amazing rock n roll success! A guy who came from nothing with little advantage and if by sheer will (and of course hard work and talent) made his career happen. The number of people who's paths crossed in Gainesville in those early days is amazing! Warren Zanes does a great job of putting the reader at the center of this amazing success story. You would be hard pressed to find another artist who has as consistently put out such a solid product as Petty. Most bands that have been around 40+ years are just doing summer shed tours riding on their past success. Not Petty. He is still making great relevant music and still giving you a fantastic live show. Perhaps only Bruce is still able to deliver what Petty does and make it seem so effortless. Tom belongs at the top of the mountain among songwriters! Cheers to Tom Petty and cheers to Warren Zanes who incidentally was part of the great 80's group the Del Fuegos among many other projects. I also recommend his book *Revolutions in Sound*. This dude is truly a modern renaissance man! 10/10 would read again!

My dad bought me my first tom petty album when I was in Jr- high (their 2nd) and my whole life changed. As an only child for many years the only music influence I had was what my parents

listened to. Dad had tons on big band albums I had no interest in and music was only listened to on rare occasions. I dug around and found a Neil Sedaca vinyl and a few similar albums but nothing that spoke to me. One Christmas Dad walked into long's music store and asked Don to pick out 3 albums for me. One was Jay and the Americans and another was John Denver... both felt more like my mom's hidden music. But the 3rd looked dark and the guys on the cover looked like nothing I had ever seen in my tiny town before. The moment the needle hit the record I was hooked. I had finally found MY music! Over the decades I've read and watched and seen many tales of tom and the band. To be honest I really didn't think

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