



# Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge

By Mark Yarm

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**Twenty years after the release of Nirvana’s landmark album *Nevermind* comes *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge*, the definitive word on the grunge era, straight from the mouths of those at the center of it all.**

In 1986, fledgling Seattle label C/Z Records released *Deep Six*, a compilation featuring a half-dozen local bands: Soundgarden, Green River, Melvins, Malfunkshun, the U-Men and Skin Yard. Though it sold miserably, the record made music history by documenting a burgeoning regional sound, the raw fusion of heavy metal and punk rock that we now know as grunge. But it wasn’t until five years later, with the seemingly overnight success of Nirvana’s “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” that *grunge* became a household word and Seattle ground zero for the nineties alternative-rock explosion.

*Everybody Loves Our Town* captures the grunge era in the words of the musicians, producers, managers, record executives, video directors, photographers, journalists, publicists, club owners, roadies, scenesters and hangers-on who lived through it. The book tells the whole story: from the founding of the *Deep Six* bands to the worldwide success of grunge’s big four (Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden and Alice in Chains); from the rise of Seattle’s cash-poor, hype-rich indie label Sub Pop to the major-label feeding frenzy that overtook the Pacific Northwest; from the simple joys of making noise at basement parties and tiny rock clubs to the tragic, lonely deaths of superstars Kurt Cobain and Layne Staley.

Drawn from more than 250 new interviews—with members of Nirvana, Pearl Jam, Soundgarden, Alice in Chains, Screaming Trees, Hole, Melvins, Mudhoney, Green River, Mother Love Bone, Temple of the Dog, Mad Season, L7, Babes in Toyland, 7 Year Bitch, TAD, the U-Men, Candlebox and many more—and featuring previously untold stories and never-before-published photographs, *Everybody Loves Our Town* is at once a moving, funny, lurid, and hugely insightful portrait of an extraordinary musical era.

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## **Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge** By Mark Yarm Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

### An Interview with Author Mark Yarm

#### **Q.) Why do you think grunge took off in Seattle as opposed to somewhere else at that time?**

A lot of it had to do with geographical isolation. Many people don't seem to realize that in the '80s--before the Starbucks/Microsoft/Amazon boom era--Seattle wasn't the cosmopolitan place it is today. People in the rest of the country pretty much considered it the hinterlands; a couple interviewees told me that back in the day, people who weren't familiar with Seattle would ask them, in all sincerity, "Seattle? Aren't there cowboys and Indians out there?" Often times, touring bands would simply skip Seattle because it was too far out of their way. So, in effect, musicians in that region had to make their own fun. And in the process, they honed their own sound.

#### **Q.) What are the biggest misconceptions people have about grunge?**

Probably the biggest one is that all these musicians were overly earnest gloom mongers sticking needles in their arms. Of course, a few were overly earnest and some were sticking needles in their arms, but for the most part--and I think this comes across in the book--these musicians were just super-funny and huge jokesters.

#### **Q.) Where does the book's title come from?**

Speaking of humor in grunge... "Everybody loves our town" is a lyric from "Overblown," an extremely arch song Mudhoney wrote for the Cameron Crowe movie *Singles*. It pretty much deflates the hype surrounding the scene at the time and takes a semi-veiled jab at at least one grunge superstar.

#### **Q.) What's your favorite grunge song?**

It almost seems too obvious an answer, but Mudhoney's "Touch Me I'm Sick" is pretty much perfect--and perfectly encapsulates the scuzzy "grunge" guitar sound and scabrous humor of the scene. Nirvana's "Negative Creep" comes to mind too.

#### **Q.) Is there a grunge band that should have made it big that did not?**

Had their super-charismatic lead singer Andrew Wood not died of a drug overdose in 1990, Mother Love Bone--the band from which Pearl Jam sprung--would likely have made it big. Also, TAD--a band fronted by Tad Doyle, who was marketed as a 300-pound ex-butcher from Boise--appeared primed for success in the early '90s. But TAD was beset by bad luck at nearly every turn. Their downward spiral began when their album *8-Way Santa* had to be yanked from shelves because the band used this hilarious, very saucy photo of a couple on the cover without their permission. (Google it.) Legend has it that the woman in the picture had since found God, and the couple took legal action.

*Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge* author Mark Yarm put together this list of 15 grunge tracks (ranging from the obscure to the chart-topping) discussed in the book.

1. Mudhoney "Touch Me I'm Sick"
2. U-Men "They"
3. Green River "Ain't Nothing to Do"

4. Soundgarden “Nothing to Say”
5. Nirvana “Love Buzz”
6. TAD “Jack”
7. 7 Year Bitch “Lorna”
8. Mother Love Bone “Crown of Thorns”
9. Temple of the Dog “Hunger Strike”
10. Pearl Jam “Even Flow”
11. Alice in Chains “Fear the Voices”
12. Screaming Trees “Nearly Lost You”
13. Melvins “Sky Pup”
14. Candlebox “You”
15. Mudhoney “Overblown”

### **A Look Inside *Everybody Loves Our Town***



Pearl Jam



Nirvana



Soundgarden

#### Review

“Yarm’s affectionate, gossipy, detailed look at the highs and lows of the contemporary Seattle music scene is one of the most essential rock books of recent years.”

—*Kirkus Review*, **\*Starred Review\***

“Hardcore fans of grunge will treasure this.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“Yarm, a former editor of *Blender*, interviewed more than 250 musicians, scenesters, and record business types

to deliver a personal, comprehensive history of grunge music...Highly recommended.”

—*Library Journal*

"Mark Yarm has assembled the gospels of Grunge music. Here is a warts-and-elbows refresher course for

those of us who still find our memories of the era a little hazy."

?**Chuck Palahniuk, author of *Fight Club***

"A very noble record of the grunge scene—and an excellent addition to the growing library of oral history music books."

—**Legs McNeil, coauthor of *Please Kill Me: The Uncensored Oral History of Punk and the forthcoming Resident Punk***

"Great oral histories are rare. Hewing a narrative from all those chaotic and often conflicting memories with testimony alone and no guide-prose or stage direction is difficult. Making that somehow intimate *and* epic is nearly impossible. When a writer pulls it off, as Mark has with *Everybody Loves Our Town*, it's really a gift: the subject or scene finally gets its definitive record and the reader gains what feels like a room full of brand new friends. One of the best rock reads in a very long time."

?**Marc Spitz (co-author *We Got The Neutron Bomb: The Untold Story of LA Punk*, music blogger *VanityFair.com*).**

"In *Everybody Loves Our Town*, Mark Yarm collects and dispenses remarkable insights about a genre no one even wants to claim as their own. As a child of grunge – who spent a humiliating chunk of the 1990s in an Alice in Chains t-shirt – I loved this book; it clarified so many things about a sound and a time I thought I already knew."

?**Amanda Petrusich, author of *It Still Moves: Lost Songs, Lost Highways, and the Search for the Next American Music***

"A deeply funny story, as well as a deeply sad story--the glorious Nineties moment when a bunch of punk rock bands from Seattle accidentally blew up into the world's biggest noise. Mark Yarm gives the definitive chronicle of how it all happened, and how it ended too soon. But the book also makes you appreciate how weird it is that this moment happened at all."

?**Rob Sheffield, author of *Love Is A Mix Tape* and *Talking To Girls About Duran Duran***

"A definitive, irreplaceable chronicle of one of rock-n-roll's greatest eras. It should sit tall on any rock lover's bookshelf."

?**Neal Pollack, author of *Never Mind The Pollacks***

"In an attempt to trace the real roots of grunge, journalist Mark Yarm compiled an exhaustive oral history from the people who lived it. In his book *Everybody Loves Our Town*, there are interviews with everyone from the early adopters to those that were late to the party, but nevertheless helped extend [grunge's] shadow of influence by turning it into a look for the world to emulate."

—***The Fader***

"This massively readable tome gathers recollections from every grunge band you've ever heard of (Pearl Jam, Nirvana, Soundgarden, Melvins) and some you haven't (we hardly knew ye, Skin Yard)...The genre's first truly comprehensive insider history...It's gossipy...and fascinating, with so much backstabbing and death it's like Shakespeare, if Shakespeare had written about heroin addicts with bad hair."

—***Revolver (4 out of 4 stars)***

"An impressive display of reportorial industriousness... It's the feel-bad rock book of the fall."—***Bloomberg Businessweek***

"Oral history is an art in itself. It's why *Everybody Loves Our Town* will endure as a classic of monumental

scale.”—*Paste Magazine*.

“For hardcore fans or people just curious about what the fuss was all about, Mark Yarm’s excellent new book *Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge*” is well worth the read. Yarm has done an admirable job of assembling an engaging, funny and ultimately sad narrative by letting the people who helped create the Jet City sound talk about what happened in their own words.—*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

“Yarm’s account captures the essential tension that made the era so compelling.”—**Greg Kot, *Chicago Tribune***

"We finished all five hundred and forty-two pages of this book in two days, abandoning all responsibility (this, friends, is why we do not have children; had there been any children about us, we would have locked these unfortunate creatures in the bathroom, so as to not be distracted) and staying up until two in the morning, reading whole chunks of it out loud to poor long-suffering Support Team."--**TheRejectionist.com**

Mark Yarm's superb book, *Everybody Loves Our Town: A History of Grunge* details the dramatic rise of the grunge movement and all of its players, including Cobain, Love and Vedder, told through the voices of the people that lived through it.--*Hollywood Reporter*

“I came away from this book with a big smile on my face. Lots of it is like a gray day in western Washington; you’ve been kicked out of yet another band, and your girlfriend is spending far too much time with the drummer from the Melvins or the Screaming Trees. In the end, though, “Everybody Loves Our Town” made me want to be young, stupid and lucky again. Mainly, it made me want to be young.”--**The Washington Post**

“*Everybody Loves Our Town* should inspire new conversations about the unique culture and people that made grunge so unusual and unforgettable to so many fans. The book is timely, as 2011 marks the 20-year anniversary of Nirvana’s “Nevermind” and Pearl Jam’s multi-platinum debut album, “Ten.” *Everybody Loves Our Town* is as good an excuse as any to put on an Alice in Chains CD and curl up with a good book about some great old friends with whom we haven’t spent much time in a while.”--**The Washington Independent Review of Books**

“*Everybody Loves Our Town* is authoritatively researched and compiled, often very funny and always just a little bit sad.”—**Buffalo News**

"Like a very extended and entertaining all-night bulls--- session among everyone who mattered during the late-'80s/early-'90s music scene."--**Seattle Weekly**

"The scope is encyclopaedic and the closeness to the subject unparalleled."--**Record Collector**

"A wild ride that is in turns uplifting and tragic." --**Your Flesh**

**Named one of the top music books of 2011 by UK Telegraph**

"Riveting, gossipy, and impossible to put down until the last quote has been read." --**New York magazine's Vulture blog**

“This exhaustive oral history features unknowns, cult figures, supporting players and stars; each gets



**the time he or she deserves as Yarm pieces together the arc of a scene that built itself from scratch, blossomed beyond most people's dreams, and then crashed. Yes, there are plenty of Kurt Cobain stories. But there's much more, too — indelible characters, weird scenes, creative chaos, laughs and tragedy and lots of cheap beer.”—NPR.org**

"Gen-X music geeks: Here's your holy grail." --**Tulsa World**

"The best book on music I've read this year." --**Omaha World-Herald**

About the Author

MARK YARM is a former senior editor at *Blender* magazine. He lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Bonnie, and is in no way related to Mudhoney frontman Mark Arm.

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Tameika Ahmed:**

Book is usually written, printed, or highlighted for everything. You can learn everything you want by a book. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important issue to bring us around the world. Close to that you can your reading expertise was fluently. A reserve Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge will make you to become smarter. You can feel much more confidence if you can know about anything. But some of you think in which open or reading some sort of book make you bored. It is not necessarily make you fun. Why they may be thought like that? Have you seeking best book or appropriate book with you?

#### **Patricia Bush:**

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#### **Michael Hollinger:**

Spent a free a chance to be fun activity to perform! A lot of people spent their free time with their family, or their very own friends. Usually they carrying out activity like watching television, about to beach, or picnic from the park. They actually doing ditto every week. Do you feel it? Would you like to something different to fill your own free time/ holiday? Could be reading a book may be option to fill your no cost time/ holiday. The first thing you ask may be what kinds of publication that you should read. If you want to try look for book, may be the book untitled Everybody Loves Our Town: An Oral History of Grunge can be good book to read. May be it is usually best activity to you.

**Lupe Holloway:**

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