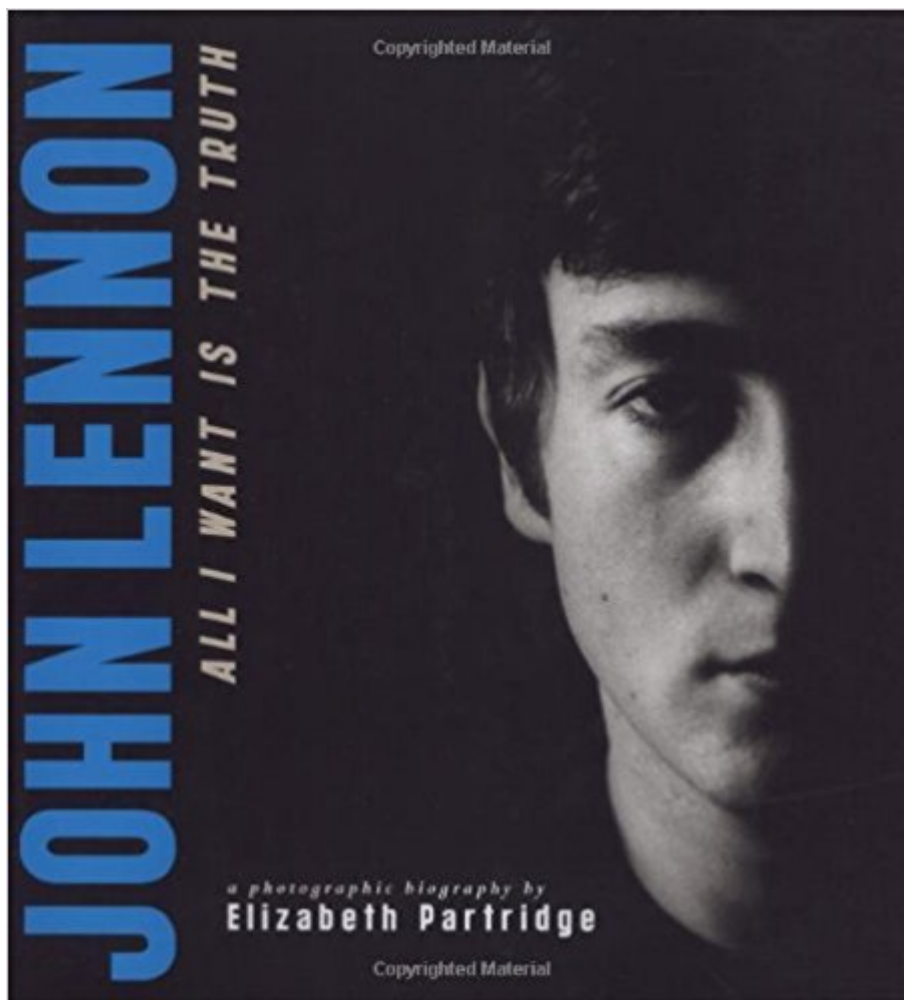




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John Lennon: All I Want Is The Truth (Bccb Blue Ribbon Nonfiction Book Award (Awards))



Synopsis

Winner of the Printz Honor Award-winning biographer Elizabeth Partridge dives into Lennon's life from the night he was born in 1940 during a World War II air raid on Liverpool, deftly taking us through his turbulent childhood and his rebellious rock'n'roll teens to his celebrated life writing, recording, and performing music with the Beatles. She sheds light on the years after the Beatles, with Yoko Ono, as he struggled to make sense of his own artistic life—one that had turned from youthful angst to suffocating fame in almost a split second. Partridge chronicles the emotional highs and paralyzing lows Lennon transformed into brilliant, evocative songs. With striking black-and-white photographs spanning his entire life, *John Lennon: All I Want Is the Truth* is the unforgettable story of one of rock's biggest legends.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up Partridge cuts through the mythology and misinformation surrounding the life of the legendary singer/songwriter and goes a long way toward revealing the complexities of his personality. She relies heavily on Lennon's own writings and the wealth of interviews he granted

during his lifetime. What emerges is an unflinchingly honest portrait of a troubled, angry, and highly creative individual who was captivated by rock 'n' roll and often used it as a means of expressing his unhappiness and confusion. Partridge skillfully captures the amazing speed at which the Beatles were swept into astonishing popularity that led to an unrelenting schedule of touring, songwriting, and recording that slowed down only when touring became both too grueling and too dangerous. She doesn't shy away from the sordid details of the band's mercurial rise to fame and fortune but her nonjudgmental commentary focuses first and foremost on the music. Lennon's life after the dissolution of the Beatles is explored in depth, as are Yoko Ono's influence and the worldwide impact of his death. With an abundance of gorgeous black-and-white photos, some of them full-page or even spreads, this handsome book will be eagerly received by both Beatles fans, who are legion, and their elders, who will enjoy reliving the glory days of the Fab Four and exploring the inner workings of a creative talent.

—Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

Starred Review Gr. 9-12. John Lennon's Aunt Mimi disapproved of his guitar hobby because "you could never make a living at it." Such anecdotes surface with delightful regularity in Partridge's biography of the influential mid-twentieth-century musician. As in *This Land Was Made for You and Me: The Life and Songs of Woody Guthrie* (2003), her mission is to uncover the person behind the image. Partridge's unflinching reports on the outlet from public attention that Lennon sought in a debauched lifestyle, in which "booze, pills, and joints were consumed in astonishing amounts," may cause some readers to think that the sensational aspects of Lennon's life have been overemphasized. But many YAs will find the nonjudgmental tone refreshing, and those drawn by the rock-music theme will admire Partridge's sensitive analysis of the Beatles' creative output. Dynamic design distinguishes the book inside and out, from the eye-catching size and shape that cleverly mimics an old vinyl album cover to the abundant archival photos within. A discography and an immense bibliography set readers on the right paths. Despite source notes limited to quotes, this has the markings of a YA biography staple--as hard-hitting as Jan Greenberg and Sandra Jordan's *Andy Warhol: Prince of Pop* (2004), and equally compelling in its perspective on the Swinging Sixties. Jennifer Mattson

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Great book on my favorite Beatle' Thank you seller!

great book, once I picked it up I could not put it down. The pictures in it are amazing, and if you do not know a lot about John's personal life, this is the book for you.

This book has some great features, but more bad ones; sorry, only 1 star. It has GREAT photos (many I have never seen before!); she has lots of John's quotations; John always seems to be telling us what is going on; and her assesment of John is very honest; John was a damaged, confused, and troubled genius. BUT, 1). this should not be a childerns' book. John's life if full of sex, and drugs (and rock & roll), and alchohol, infidelity, violence, betrayal, orgies, shop-lifting, insults, etc., etc., etc., and more and more and more of each NON-STOP throughout his life! This is not what 9 through 17 (!) year-olds should be reading about. And her gearing it towards children, using an attempt at their vocabulary makes the book always seem silly and almost stupid. 2). And, perhaps to make it more readable for children, the author skims over things SO quickly and squeezes months and years into one or two paragraphs, which really distorts the story, and the true perspective of the 'long and winding road' that the Beatles did take. 3). And too much incorrect information, and too much mis-interpretation. One example: page 4, first page of Chapter 1 : 'It wasn't that he was being raised by his aunt and uncle' instead of his Mother and abscent Father? YES, IT WAS. That had a tremendous influence on his unhappiness and bitterness towards life. 'It was something inside of him, something in the way he viewed the world' that no one understood? Of course there were genes, but if you looked at what his Aunt and Grandfather were doing, seperating him from his Mother, and his father's total withdrawal from John's life, you would begin to understand a lot. And, no, there were NO BOMBS being dropped the day or night that John was born, Sorry, that has been well researched; and please review all stories told by Aunt Mimi. 4). Only two tiny photos of Cynthia, and how many of YO? And YO gets a 5-page bio? Where is Cynthia's bio? The book kindly shows how Cynthia (and George Martin!) were so aware of the 'tenderness' that was barried under all the hate and aggression in John's outer-self, and seems they were about the only two who truly cared for John. Cynthia gave John so much love, attention, care, sex, sacrifice to try to comfort him and allow that tenderness to come out. It sadly didn't work, and was completely blown away when YO showed up, aware of John's fame, income, and his obvious slip off into the deep end. Yes, John wrote and recorded some great music with the Beatles. But he was damaged by his early family, he lost too many close ones to death, and he simply always used too many drugs and drank way too much 'booze' (as it is often refered to in the book, so that children will giggle?). How many times did he drop LSD? By about the time YO showed up, John was damaged perhaps beyond repair, and YO moved in and took over (not to mention her starting him

on heroin!!!). 5). Elizabeth just does not seem to understand the other possible interpretations of YO's influence and control of John's life. YO didn't care at all about John's tenderness, or the Beatles, or his family. Please look more carefully at the junk (sorry, I WILL NOT call anything that YO ever did as any form of art!) that YO was doing before and during and after John's life. No, 'she wasn't a perfect fit...as she wailed, groaned, and howled.' But she was, perhaps, perfect garbage? I was always SO saddened as I had read about John's doings during those Post-Beatles years, and so disgusted by the influence of YO, and very sad to read how that is all now being turned into 'John having found his soul-mate' stuff. Sorry, John had gone rather crazy, and honestly did not know what he was doing or talking about anymore. His sister Julia said 'he went into the black bag as one of the great musical geniuses of his time, and came out a total lunatic.' Sorry, cannot find that exact quote in her book. Many of us were so saddened and dissapointed to find out the 'truth' about John and the Beatles back in the late 60's as they were falling apart, and then in the decade following. So many of us had adored the Beatles, and especially John! Many of did our 'private' revenges...(until that a.h. did his very public and final one!). I only bought his post-Beatles albumns used, and sold them back to the shops after one listen. I listend to 'Double-fantasy' once and threw it away. I still do have my Beatles cards. I can remember exactly where I was standing, with my brother, when I opened my very first pack of Beatles cards (back in 1965) and my first pack had the 'John' card in it!!! That is over in a little box in the next room. When you read carefully about all the things that John sufferd through as a child, all the friends he lost, the parental support he never had (he followed 'Just William!'), the horrible decisions he was always making, and his horrible behavior (in Hamburg!!!!, on tours, to Cynthia and Julian, to George Martin, to Paul, etc., etc., etc...) we can see John was a mess. And then look at the music he wrote. His Beatles songs, with and without Paul are some of the most beautiful musical things on the planet. Please, Elizabeth, toss this one out, and write a better book about John.

This is an excellent book and the photo detail and background alone make it all the more effective in imparting Lennon information. It is aesthetically pleasing to the eye. While this author does not deify or glorify John, I did feel that a rather heavy handed emphasis was placed on his foibles and human weaknesses. From all accounts John did not want to be deified or glorified; his post-Beatle song "Working Class Hero" reflects this sentiment to a certain extent. This book appears to be written in the tone of his redoubtable Aunt Mimi, who raised him during the bulk of his boyhood. There are no other voices to add balance and a rounder, fuller picture. I felt that this book was rather slanted in one direction and did not fulfill its promise to Gimme Some Truth, in this case a more balanced set

of input. Read Cynthia Lennon's book "John," Alan Clayson's biography entitled "John," which is a volume in the Beatle set and Ray Coleman's biography of the Chief Beatle instead. This is a fairly good book, but it is what it is. The others listed herein are objective and scholarly works about this intensely complex man.

Elizabeth Partridge examines the life of John Lennon as a fan as well as writer. Her book, ALL I WANT IS THE TRUTH, caters to those curious about the man, musician, and peace activist. The book is perfect for readers who know nothing about the former Beatle and later as a solo artist. The format of the book is ideal for school libraries with its textbook-like quality. Partridge interweaves historical events both with her narrative and the photographs she includes in the book that occurred during John Lennon's lifespan, which provides an historical backdrop to the life of the former Beatle. Partridge provides a chronological overview of John Lennon's life from his birth, childhood, life as a Beatle, his activism, house husband, and solo career. Each chapter is beautifully organized with Partridge's basic narrative. The secondary and primary sources she uses are compiled in a reader friendly format at the end of the book, which is very helpful for anyone who wants to do further research about the man. ALL I WANT IS THE TRUTH is a very intimate collage of stories about who John Lennon was. The photographs, which are mostly in black and white are simply moving, and have been rarely seen before, especially the photographs during his childhood. The photographs will enhance the memory of John Lennon for those who have followed his career and life, and will further hold that memory near and dear to their heart. However, for readers who are now just discovering this man, there will be an understanding of why John Lennon affected so many lives. I commend Elizabeth Partridge for an excellent book that provides the truth and preserves the memory of John Lennon. ALL I WANT IS THE TRUTH is a highly recommended book for everyone.

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