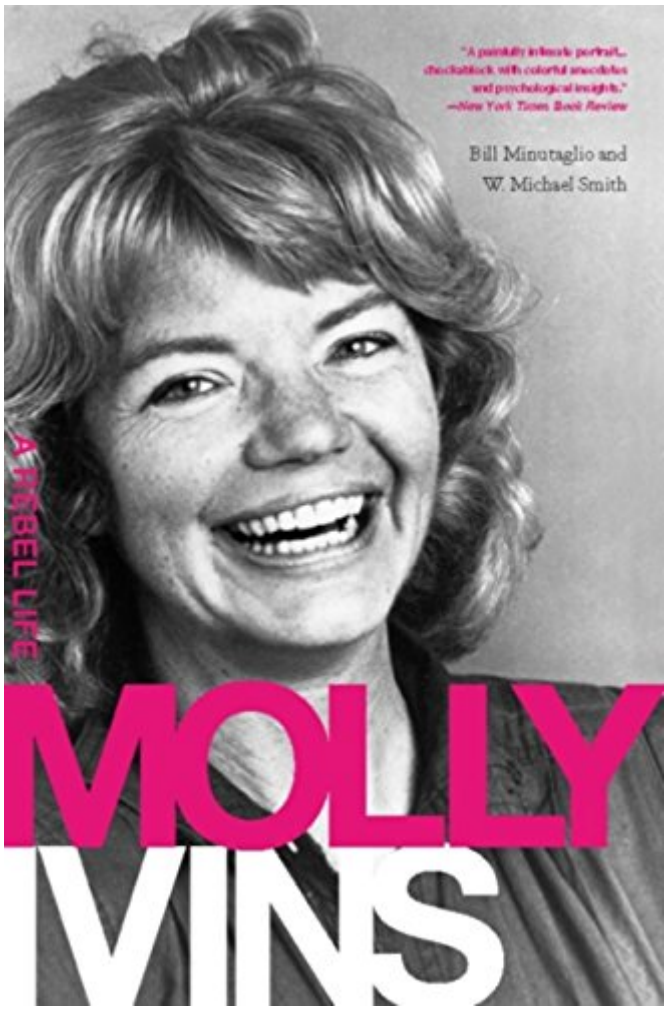
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Molly Ivins: A Rebel Life



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Synopsis

She was a groomed for a gilded life in moneyed Houston, but Molly Ivins left the country club behind to become one of the most provocative, courageous, and influential journalists in American history. Presidents and senators called her for advice; her column ran in 400 newspapers; her books, starting with Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?, were bestsellers. But despite her fame, few people really knew her: what her background was, who influenced her, how her political views developed, or how many painful struggles she fought.Molly Ivins is a comprehensive, definitive narrative biography, based on intimate knowledge of Molly, interviews with her family, friends, and colleagues, and access to a treasure trove of her personal papers. Written in a rollicking style, it is at once the saga of a powerful, pugnacious woman muscling her way to the top in a world dominated by men; a fascinating look behind the scenes of national media and politics; and a sobering account of the toll of addiction and cancer. Molly Ivins adds layers of depth and complexity to the story of an American legend—a woman who inspired people both to laughter and action.

Book Information

File Size: 2186 KB

Print Length: 360 pages

Publisher: PublicAffairs (October 15, 2009)

Publication Date: November 10, 2009

Language: English

ASIN: B002SZUDFW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #212,119 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #137 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Journalists #506 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Professionals & Academics > Journalists #61749 inÃ Â Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction

Customer Reviews

Molly Ivins was a funny, incisive, brilliant observer of the American political landscape. Her years

covering the Texas "lege" had given her a nose for smelling a skunk before it sprayed. She delighted her readers with her witty descriptions and analyses of politicians and their foibles. She called George W. Bush "Shrub" which perfectly described the less than brilliant son of the original Bush. She gave Texas Gov. Rick Perry the name "governor good hair" by which he is still known today.Molly was an upcruster from a wealthy Republican family who was quick to see how "things worked" by observing her own father and his cronies as they wheeled and dealed in the Houston of the oil boom. She was smart, well-educated, spoke French, and could slide from an East Coast cultured voice into her downhome Texas twang when she needed to in order to get the story that she wanted.Her life was not an easy one. It’s never easy when a person realizes that their parents’ life and social milieu and political positions totally conflict with ones own view of the world. She spent her life dealing with that confict. It took a toll emotionally and physically and psychologically BUT at the end of the day, she was a voice that spoke to a lot of people -- even the ones who didn’t agree with her political views could never deny that she could get to the heart of an issue quickly and expose it and make it comprehensible to the reading public.I miss Molly Ivins and reading this book which was written by two people who knew her well made me realize once again that when we lose a voice like hers, we lose a lot.

While Molly Ivins: A Rebel Life is an interesting, and dare I say valuable, book; its flaws leave the impression that, well, Molly deserves better. The authors’ painstaking interviews and research result in an oddly colorless portrait of one of journalism’s trailblazing originals. It should have been a vivid story, but reads like a research paper that begins with "she was born" and ends with vignettes in which Molly comes across as a caricature of herself. The strengths of this book consist of the painstakingly researched episodes of Molly’s life, the lists of her many friends and colleagues, her education, her years in New York, France, Austin and Dallas, and the development of her journalistic and public personas.Its weaknesses are lack of insight and inconsistency. For example, in one chapter, as Molly is coming to grips with the damage alcohol is causing her, she describes overhearing her friend Ann Richards saying about her, "I can’t stand her any more." In the next chapter, Ivins and Richards are BFFs again with no explanation. In a column Molly wrote after her mother’s death, Mrs. Ivins is described as several things, among them a bad housekeeper and ’ditsy’, but other than in the words of one contemporary, none of those character traits are described in the chapters on Molly’s childhood. Molly’s father is referred to as a ’martinet’ who caused Molly’s self-destructive tendencies. The groundwork for understanding exactly how this happened should have been laid in describing Molly’s childhood, but it wasn’t.She supposedly stopped drinking

several times and underwent treatment at the Hazelden and the Betty Ford Clinics. Those events were referred to in retrospect, but the extreme circumstances that would have led to the decision to seek in-patient treatment are a mystery. Apparently she was close enough to the Clintons to rate a handwritten note of encouragement when she went public with her breast cancer diagnosis, but how that friendship came to be is a blank, and in one very odd scene, she and George W. Bush hug each other at a public event. Yes, that was weird, the authors seem to agree, but there's no explanation other than Ivins' own acknowlegement that President Bush was a likeable guy. Did President Bush feel the same way about her? The reader would like to know.Molly was described as undergoing three rounds of cancer treatments when at that time she'd only undergone two. One chapter refers to her as child-like in her lack of self-discipline. In the next chapter her incredible self-discipline in never missing a deadline is discussed. Which is it? Perhaps if the authors had shown more and told less, it would have been a better book. This reader noticed that in several instances only one source was quoted to make a point, when a more rounded picture would have been more valuable. The whole book had a rushed and incomplete feeling, as if it was rushed to press while Ms. Ivins was still fresh in everyone's memory.I'm glad I read this book. I wish it had been a little more informative in some areas and a little less in others. Perhaps the problem is that Ivins' death is still too recent for literary perspective, and that the authors maybe had too much material. Perhaps they'll try again with a bit more distance. Molly Ivins deserves it.

Outstanding journalist and Texas legend Molly Ivins richly deserves this thorough reconstruction of her astounding career as a frontline news reporter and columnist.A plodding style could make it difficult for non-fans to slog through the first few chapters about her family life in Houston in the 1950s and her college exploits in the early sixties. But Bill Minutaglio and W. Michael Smith use massive research of her bountiful writings in newspapers and magazines from Texas to Minnesota to New York and back to Texas, interviewing Molly's many friends and co-workers along the way. Many of her longtime friends and fellow workers are as talented and famous as Molly was, so this is an especially appealing look at journalism to those of us who shared the profession from the late sixties through the first decade of the new century.We had the good fortune to see Molly in a live college performance in Missouri late in her career and took to heart her autographed inscription in our copy of "Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?": "Y'all Raise more Hell!"Molly Ivins Can't Say That, Can She?Minutaglio and Smith apparently couldn't stand to leave out any of their research details, so it's a little repetitive in spots. But on a five-star scale, their effort gets four full stars -- a lot, even in Texas.[[ASIN:B0032IKGT2 Molly Ivins: A Rebel Life (Hardcover)]

Ever since I heard her on CBS News while a student at Indiana University in 1979 I've always been a fan and read her columns religiously. She knew her subjects, spoke extremely well and was lucid on angles of politics and power. After reading her story I now understand why. Only downside to this is her and her late boyfriend, Hank Howards adoration of " St Ayn Rand", patron saint of Paul Ryan et al's views of government and humanity. Although it broke her heart I was very thankful that he was taken out when was so we could enjoy and laugh with the girl from Houston. To me Molly Ivins is the "Yellow Rose of Texas." RIP, girlfriend!

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