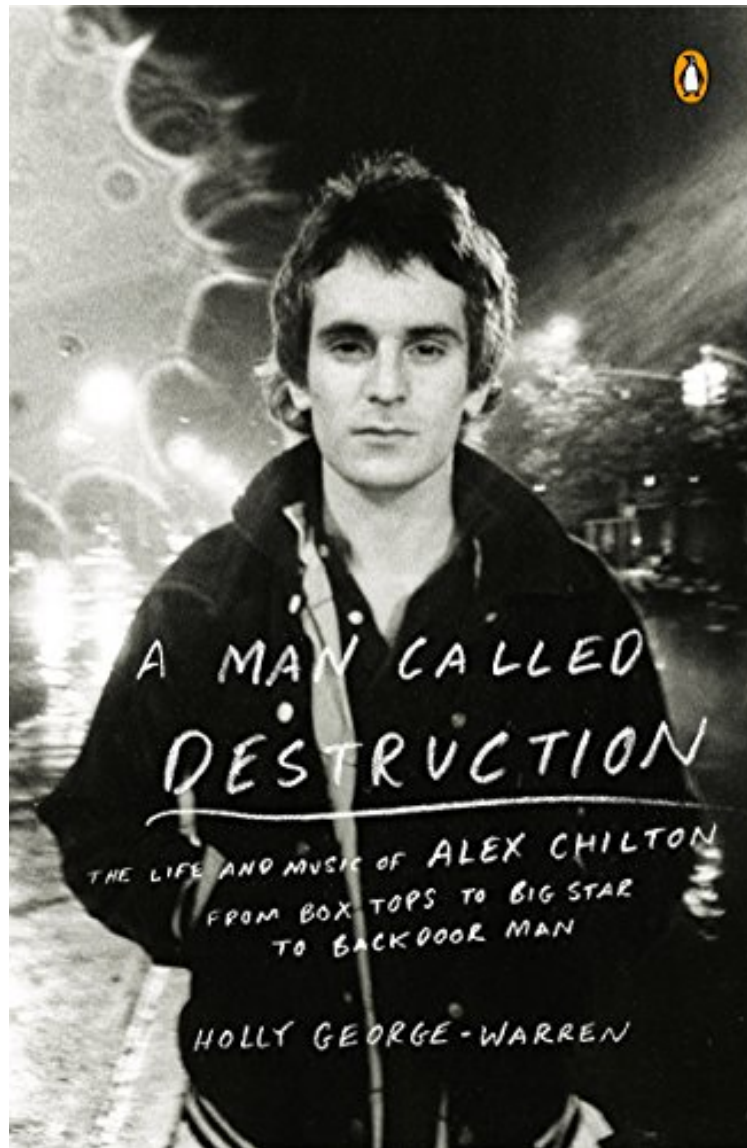



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A Man Called Destruction: The Life and Music of Alex Chilton, From Box Tops to Big Star to Backdoor Man

Holly George-Warren

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Holly George-Warren : A Man Called Destruction: The Life and Music of Alex Chilton, From Box Tops to Big Star to Backdoor Man before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Man Called Destruction: The Life and Music of Alex Chilton, From Box Tops to Big Star to Backdoor Man:

93 of 95 people found the following review helpful. Absolutely superb biography. By B.O.E. Short form: if you are

interested in Alex Chilton or Big Star to any degree, this book is a must read. An incredibly well-researched and superbly written biography of a really complex, interesting man and his music. Longer form: I know at least a bit about the subject matter. I'm the author of the 33 1/3 book *Big Star's Radio City*. I started out in the mid 70s as a Big Star / Chilton fan. Eventually met Alex in '1979, played some shows with him and stayed in touch over the decades. I spent two years doing research and interviews for the 33 1/3 book and even before doing that, had read pretty much every article written about him. I also provided material for the *Nothing Can Hurt Me* film. (I didn't know Holly when she started the book but gladly provided her with all of my research materials, notably Alex's last extended interview.) So before I got to read the book, I was thinking that I'd probably be pretty familiar most of the details. Well, as Lou Reed once observed, "Just goes to show how wrong you can be." Even if you're the biggest Alex Chilton fan on the planet, you'll be amazed at how much new material (much of it from previously unexplored sources) Holly has uncovered and how many new details and insights she adds to the parts of Alex's story that you think you know all about. Start reading and you'll immediately know that you're in the hands of serious major league biographer. One paragraph in I realized that I wasn't going to be skipping past a single sentence. Most rock /music biographies read like an extended magazine feature and don't bring anything really new to the table. Way too many are just cobbled together from already existing material that's repeated over and over as gospel truth without any reexamination (it takes a lot more work to do real research). *A Man Called Destruction* reads like Peter Guralnick's bios of Elvis and Sam Cooke or the Gary Giddins bio of Bing Crosby. It's on that level and that's about the highest praise I could give a book in this genre. If you're not totally familiar with Alex's work, the book will make you want to explore it all. If you've heard it all, you'll hear it in a new way. I'd write more but it's time for you to stop reading this and start reading *A Man Called Destruction*. 16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. I'd rate this a ten if I could! By James H.

Lynch Despite the Dawn Eden quote, this is an exemplary bio of a difficult man... Spent the last two nights with forty years of his music playing in the background as I filled in all the holes left in the other books covering the same subject matter 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. A Job Well Done By Customer Holly George-Warren has done it. She has written the perfect biography of Alex Chilton. Any person who has been touched by his artistry yet sometimes confused by Chilton's mercurial persona will leave this book with the most thorough understanding of this talented and troubled icon / iconoclast. George-Warren approaches her subject with an enormous amount of affection and respect but never shies away from Chilton's troubled and troubling personal behaviors. Read Bruce Eaton's *Radio City* book to understand Big Star's magical studio work. Watch the *Nothing Can Hurt Me* documentary to see the visual representations of Big Star and Alex Chilton. Read *A Man Called Destruction* to understand the real Alex Chilton.

The first biography of the artist who "essentially invented indie and alternative rock" (Spin) A brilliant and influential songwriter, vocalist, and guitarist, the charismatic Alex Chilton was more than a rock star—he was a true cult icon. Award-winning music writer Holly George-Warren's *A Man Called Destruction* is the first biography of this enigmatic artist, who died in 2010. Covering Chilton's life from his early work with the chart-topping Box Tops and the seminal power-pop band Big Star to his experiments with punk and roots music and his sprawling solo career, *A Man Called Destruction* is the story of a musical icon and a richly detailed chronicle of pop music's evolution, from the mid-1960s through today's indie rock.

From Booklist After performing at his school talent show, Chilton was recruited by a local band for a recording session because he sounded black. The resulting song, "The Letter," became one of the biggest hits of 1967. Sixteen-year-old Chilton toured with the Box Tops, but the band soon broke up. He formed Big Star, an influential band known for its harmonies and jangling guitars. While critically praised, they failed to sell any records. In New York City, Chilton performed at CBGBs just as punk was happening. He developed a reputation for a cultivated amateurishness and unpolished performances. Dark moods, tumultuous relationships, and self-destructive behavior brought on multiple nadirs, both professional and personal. Moving to New Orleans to straighten out his life, he worked as a dishwasher and a janitor before returning to music, playing his own brand of quirky music as well as reunion shows before dying in 2010. George-Warren's biography, based on interviews with family, friends, and fellow musicians, is best in its depiction of the early years in Memphis, painting a three-dimensional picture of a troubled, charismatic, and talented artist. --Ben Segedin "It's a credit to Warren's unflinching tone that the Chilton of *Destruction* is a charismatic, oft-frustrating man unwilling to kowtow to anything or anyone ... You'll never hear his music the same way again." ~LA Times "A Man Called Destruction is also the only thing about this criminally under-appreciated band you'll ever need to read. It does more than all the articles, books, documentary films, and cover albums with liner notes written by famous fanboys about how important and life-changing Big Star's recordings were combined... Nobody has done such a great job telling his story before. This is what makes Holly George-Warren's achievement such an important one, and *A Man Called Destruction* one of the most important books on the life and work of a musician to come out this year." ~Jason Diamond, Flavorwire "This book is all Chilton, all the way." ~The New York Times "A revelatory

account of [Chilton's] career."~NPR
"A thoroughly reported biography illuminating the life and work of one of the more mystifying and influential cult figures in rock.... Chilton receives the biography he deserves."~Kirkus
"The immensely gifted and highly influential musician Alex Chilton has long deserved a big biography. Holly George-Warren's meticulously researched and beautifully written book shows us Chilton in all his mysterious glory. *A Man Called Destruction* gets to the heart of the man by focusing on the music he made (and the music that made him) with great precision and authority. I loved reading this sensitive, sympathetic, and intelligent portrait of a complicated and important figure."~Dana Spiotta, author of *Stone Arabia*
"This book is the very definition of a labor of love. Every page of it is infused with Holly George-Warren's affection for and deep understanding of Alex Chilton and his groundbreaking work. Even its most candid moments are presented with empathy and a profound respect. Chilton could be thorny and difficult character -- he is fortunate to have found a biographer eager to untangle the knots of his character and to find the sweet heart beating within."~Anthony DeCurtis, Contributing Editor, *Rolling Stone*
About the Author
Holly George-Warren is the award-winning author of the New York Times bestseller *The Road to Woodstock* (with Michael Lang), *Public Cowboy #1: The Life and Times of Gene Autry*, *Punk 365*, and a dozen other books. The two-time Grammy nominee has written for such publications as *Rolling Stone*, the *New York Times*, *The Village Voice*, and *Entertainment Weekly*. Coeditor of *The Rolling Stone Encyclopedia of Rock Roll*, she served as the editorial director of *Rolling Stone Press* for eight years. She lives in upstate New York.