



## Special Deluxe: A Memoir of Life & Cars

*Neil Young*

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Neil Young's first memoir, *Waging Heavy Peace*, was an international bestseller and critical sensation. The Wall Street Journal wrote that it was "terrific: modest, honest, funny and frequently moving," while The New York Times found it "as charismatically off the wall as Mr. Young's records." Now, in *Special Deluxe*, Young has fashioned a second work of extraordinary reminiscences about his Canadian boyhood, his musical influences, his family, the rock 'n' roll life, and one of his deepest, most ebullient passions: cars. Through the framework of the many vehicles he's collected and driven, Young explores his love for the well-crafted vintage automobile, and examines his newfound awareness of his hobby's negative environmental impact. With his ferocious devotion to clean energy, he recounts the saga of Lincvolt, his specially modified electric car, and his efforts to demonstrate to lawmakers and consumers how viable non-gas-guzzling vehicles truly can be.

*Special Deluxe* captures Young's singular lyrical, almost musical, voice. Witty, eclectic, and wonderfully candid, *Special Deluxe* is an unforgettable amalgam of memories, artwork, and political ponderings from one of the most genuine and enigmatic artists of our time.

## Special Deluxe: A Memoir of Life & Cars Details

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## From Reader Review Special Deluxe: A Memoir of Life & Cars for online ebook

### Amaia says

<http://librodelosviernes.blogspot.com...>

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### Ashley Daviau says

I didn't enjoy this quite as much as *Waging Heavy Peace* but it was a thoroughly enjoyable read nonetheless! Neil Young has a way with words, whether it's in novel or in song form, that man knows how to write beautifully and draw you into a story or song. I'm no car person but I especially enjoyed the little side stories about his cars and the gorgeous illustrations to show us what they looked like, I thought it was an excellent addition to the book. I also really loved learning more about Neil's life, he really is a fascinating man!

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### Marlene says

Organized better than his first memoir, this memoir explains his love of cars and appreciation for the environment. I appreciated his explanation for his Anti-Tar Sands tour in 2014 which received much media attention (mostly negative, unfortunately). Also this memoir indirectly explained his new relationship with Darryl Hannah (his pending divorce from Pegi caught me by surprise because he highly praised his wife in his memoir from the previous year.)

Now that Neil Young has satisfactorily explained the old car and environment passions that I didn't quite understand in his first memoir, I look forward to his next installment when he explains his love for Pono and dislike of iTunes.

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### Gary Lang says

So Neil Young has written another book. In **"Waging Heavy Peace"** he wandered around in a fog of new-found sobriety, talking about his high definition Pono business, talked a little bit about some of his cars – apparently only scratching the surface; the guy is a car hoarder – and a little bit about his growing up in Canada.

After reading these two books and going through his Archives Vol. 1, which was released in Blu-ray with a faux-leather book of lyrics and photographs, and reminiscences, I get the idea... Young is going to tell us about his life in a 10-year period in which he'll release books, music films, and box sets from the Neil Young Archives. This is not crass commercialism; this guy really speaks most clearly through his music. But the text is starting to take shape. He really is most articulate through music. I can see why he might not want to write a traditional memoir. I am not sure he can do it.

It kind of feels like Young read a book about writing your memoirs which counsels to pivot on a subject; your favorite song, your houses, or your cars. Young has picked the latter. Since he's clearly a hoarder of cars, it's not a bad subject to build your timeline on. He's embellished it with his own watercolor sketches of each car. Since Young has a fetish for vintage cars from the distinctive Harley Earl era of car design, this Neil Young turns out to make the focus on these particular possessions quite interesting. I think if Earl and his contemporaries were alive, they'd approve of Young's descriptions of these car's designs. He is quite... well... lyrical about them. In a way it's too bad he did this, because without the book as outlet, there are probably a few good songs about some of these cars in there.

He spends a lot of time in the book talking about the politics of energy. I think you can safely skip this. This part of the book can be scanned quickly. He adds nothing new to the science or anything illuminating on the state of art or practice for alternative energies. He doesn't even seem to get anywhere the fact that as one of the 1979 era "No Nukes" people he set us up for needing the fracking he decries as harmful to the land, and rightfully so. Nuclear energy isn't mentioned once in the book. Search for "nuclear" – you won't find it.

If you like Neil Young's music, are interested in the history of the 60-70s Laurel Canyon music scene, are interested in vintage cars, the book is extremely interesting. If not, I have no idea why you'd read it.

He can say whatever he wants; anyone who writes and records "Expecting to Fly" has already made the world a better place, and has the right to say what he wants. I was glad to read these book decades after discovering his music. He's still hear, saying interesting things for me to listen to. I'm pretty grateful for that.

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## **Taylor says**

I listened to the audiobook, which I really enjoyed because Neil Young reads it. I don't think I would have enjoyed it quite as much; nothing really stellar about the writing. I really enjoyed his stories and life told through the lens of his cars. This is about Young's life but also about the cars, people, and influences in his life. He slips in some politics, some stories, and a lot of weed smoking. I learned a lot about Young as a person - he is very honest about himself and has clearly done a lot of contemplation about the kind of person he has been.

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## **Micaylah G says**

Whew what a ride!

Although Neils 2nd book doesnt leave off where the first ended, it is a story unto its own. Again it is like sitting have a conversation with a very complex gentleman. The first few chapters though had me thinking that I had gone to an Autorama, not an activity I would normally do. At all!

But it was Neil Young and so I pushed forward. Was I ever glad I did, as I discovered something I think I will never forget now. If you want to know what that is, jump down to my last two sentences.

So off we go. Most of the book is a rehash of his life and some explanations. It is based on his life with cars. Plain and simple, yet not so.

It starts off in Omamee, around 1950. Neil recalls his dog and the car. You immediately notice he tags gasoline prices and a few chapters further he clocks in the CO2 lbs the old behemoths emitted, and continues this for almost every road trip he talks about. If you know anything about Mr Young, you know where this book might be driving to. But it's a fascinating trip and a very clever way to share his life and passions, mistakes and human-ness. (not even sure that's a word)

The book takes you again through his life but with a turn to something a little more serious than the memoirs of a rockin' legend. There is purpose to this missive besides outlining his life. That was his first book. What you get here are his attachment and very obviously love of cars, dogs trains, family, friends and music. The main focus is on his admiration of the people mover...the car.

There are parts of this book that are so palpable that you are there in the moment and everything else just fades away. The words become your momentary reality even though they are someone else's words. Someone else's life and someone else's passion. If you get totally engrossed in the book, you own that for 376 pages.

As the book progresses and the story unfolds you are swept away by an automobile on each adventure. Most are successful, some sadly are not. In my opinion Neil Young has always been a bit of a private person. I like that in a public figure of any genre and the ability to be so can't be easy. Here he lays bare some pretty interesting parts and I had to laugh at some of the antics I did not know about him but was so grateful he chose to share.

I also love the sketches of the cars he has drawn. Simple in their own right yet able to stand on their own.

And so the book continues. Until a barely perceptible change takes place...and you almost seem to be reading a whole other book. NY clearly sees the writing on the wall regarding fossil fuels and the need for alternative propulsion methods. It becomes an almost manic core need for him to help see the US through a transition that is going to take place on this planet whether the gas guzzling love affair with cars the United States has, likes it or not. He would do well to continue his writings on China's newfound love of the same.

His description of Death Highway near Fort McMurray is a chilling recount that will forever live with me. And even though I have seen the pictures and heard other tales (especially Aboriginal ones), this one is the most vivid and intimate one I have ever read. Perhaps it is because I am Canadian that this part of the book rings so harshly with me. But it is a narrative that will stick with you for a long long time if you are any kind of an environmentalist.

Personally; I believe Fort McMurray's days are numbered, left to be an oddity and blight in my home province of Alberta. Maybe not in my generation or even the next, but soon. I feel no guilt over this as he does. I never thought the tar sands were a good idea anyway. Alberta would recover from this. They are a resource rich place full of renewable ones and technology is not stopped at the borders. I have faith.

I sincerely hope NY is continuously inspired to write. His style would make a menu interesting. He is a joy to read and I am hoping he gets the bug again to put pen to paper.

All I can say is this....

In his music, you see the Artist.

In his books, you see the Man.

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## **Bjorn says**

Neil's second memoir in just a few years. Do we really need *two* books on the life of an aging - if occasionally still brilliant - rocker, both written within months of each other? Especially when *Waging Heavy Peace* was quite good, but also a bit unfocused?

Well, sort of. *Special Deluxe* is a much more straight-forward autobiography than the predecessor, in that Neil uses cars that he or his family have owned through the years as signposts for changes in his life, from a small town in Canada to superstardom (somewhat ironically, given his praise for his wife, ending just before his recent divorce). And Neil *loves* his cars. He may not remember exactly when he played a certain gig, but he'll remember every detail of the car he bought on a whim on the way home, and the technical problems that led to him getting rid of it. And ultimately, the big question: How can he be a socially conscious old save-the-Earth hippie and still drive around in huge 1950s gas-guzzlers? Well, he wouldn't be Neil Young if he didn't on a whim decide to do something about that...

Full disclaimer: You had better have at least a passing interest in cars, and preferably alternative fuels, if you want to get through this. As much as Neil often uses the car as an entry point to a story he wants to tell about life, fame, drugs, music or family, there are also long stretches where he seems to impatiently brush all that stuff aside just so he can gush about the design of the grill of a 1959 Continental for a while.

But you take the good with the bad; even if the book occasionally drags, it has that charm that comes from listening to an enthusiast being indulged to nerd out about something he loves, and I can't not like how unassuming it comes across. Neil Young's music has always been a work in progress, and judging by both his books, he himself is as well - there are no sure answers, no big lessons learned that don't come with a shrug that you can't always be perfect. It's not a book I *need*, but you can't live by need alone.

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## **Ron S says**

Written with a laid back style that comes across like a favorite, somewhat crotchety uncle reminiscing on a front porch with a beer, Young talks mostly about the cars in his life in this second installment of his memoirs. The obsessive repetition over PONO that may have turned some readers off in the first volume is absent here, which doesn't mean this is a typical kiss and tell rock 'n roll story either. But in talking about the cars in his life Young manages to tell us a lot about the times he grew up in, his early and later musical career, and the people he loved on the way. Anyone with a sentimental bone in their body should be aware that given the recent announcement that Young and his wife Peggy have filed for divorce, you'll likely burst into tears reading all of the tender and loving words he's written about her in this book.

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## **Peter O'Connor says**

Imagine if you finally met someone as interesting as Neil Young and all he wanted to do was talk about cars. That is kind of this book in a nutshell. *Special Deluxe* uses his ownership of different cars at different periods of his life to act as a vehicle (see what I did there?) for telling elements of his life story. Having a foot in both the automobile camp as well as the rock memoir camp isn't a bad idea in itself but in this case,

the book doesn't really scratch either itch. The cars he talks about (mostly stylish fifties gas guzzlers) are without question cool-looking cars with great aesthetics but still the point is, that Neil Young gets to collect cars while the rest of us get to collect, um, Neil Young records. Overall, still not too bad and you can add an extra star to the review if you love automobiles.

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### **Simon Sweetman says**

Another sometimes interesting, often shambolic and mildly fascinating memoir from Neil Young. You've got to love him in all his stubbornness - or not, I guess? There's some interesting yarns about the music - about songwriting, where the lyrics/songs came from - in and around tall tales of cars and gigs. It's meandering as fuck - but then, Neil Young fans will sit through *Old Ways* and *Landing on Water* to get to *Ragged Glory* and *Sleeps With Angels*. This is no *Freedom*, probably more like "Life" or *Trans* - sometimes intriguing, sometimes dead boring. But I love him for doing whatever the fuck he wants - always.

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### **Steve Peifer says**

If this was written by an unknown no one would care and no one would ever finish it. Maybe you have to be a car guy to get it. I still like his music but the more i get to know him the less I like him. What he calls following his muse sounds suspiciously like an indulged selfish narcissistic jerk. Who ever thought David Crosby would have the high moral ground on anything?

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### **Joseph says**

*Special Deluxe: A Memoir of Life and Cars* by Neil Young

Anyone who knows me, knows I have a strong dislike for cars. It is not the car but more so the worship of the car. People playout their lives on around cars. Who is driving? Where can we park? How much is parking? How much is gas? We also design our cities and suburbs around cars. Newer housing developments don't have sidewalks, merely a concrete path from the front door to the curb where you park your car. The corner store and the idea of a self contained neighborhood have disappeared and been replaced by large shopping centers, big box stores, and strip malls. Supporting public transportation is seen as a subsidy, while tearing up tree lined boulevards to add lanes is seen as an investment. So, I was a bit hesitant to pick up this book.

I know Neil Young's greatest hits and *Live Rust* from high school where certain crowds would agree with Neil Young's phrase "It is better to burn out than to rust." and also quote "Homegrown." I still know the lyrics to that one. My previous knowledge of his life was fairly limited. Neil Young was a marijuana guy and like Patti Smith found it helped release their creativity. No heroin because the idea is to create and not block or escape life. It's a cliché, but one I give little argument. In the book Young does mention a copious amount of marijuana smoking, some drinking, and cocaine a few times. He is no Keith Richards in that sense.

Young can tell a story and this storytelling is folksy and personal. He captures a level that the reader feels is almost one on one. It's like meeting a friend you haven't seen in thirty years and catching up. Some stories

are funny, others are about his career, and some are touching. Compared to some of the other rock star autobiographies I have read Young comes up one top. His stories seem to be more about telling a story, than telling a story about Neil Young.

While I was reading this book a friend emailed and said, did you know Neil Young is getting a divorce? I said, "No, but I am half way through the book and he is on his third wife." The last half of the book he remained with the third wife (and remained married for thirty-six years). To Young's credit he never speaks ill of his ex-wives or of marriage problems. He takes the high road, so to speak.

Cars, yes, there is a great deal in this book about cars (and dogs too). Each story centers around a car. The car the family drove to Florida. The car his father got before he left. Young has owned more cars than some towns have. The cars are different though than your typical rock star car collector. There is a Bentley and a few sports cars, but most are old and a bit eccentric: A Jeep pickup truck, an Eldorado Biarritz, plenty of old Buicks. Each car has its own personality some work and some don't. Some he's kept and others he sold quickly. Each one, however, has a story. There are watercolor paintings of the cars at the start of each chapter keeping with Young's thinking of cars an art more than just transportation.

Throughout the book, when a car is mentioned, Young tells the reader the miles per gallon the car got and the number of pounds of CO2 the car released per mile or on an extended trip. Another point to respect about Young is he has become environmentally conscious. He has worked with bio fuels and electric cars, putting a great deal of his own money into the program.

Young is an excellent storyteller and it shows in his writing either in prose or song. Chapters are punctuated with lyrics he wrote at the time of the story. The use of lyrics in the writing helps explain the meaning. Sorry, no answer on who the Cinnamon Girl was. This is perhaps the best autobiography by a musician I have read. I am surprised say, it beats out Patti Smith's *Just Kids*, and I really, really like Patti Smith. Young's style and language communicate to the masses on a personal level. There is no "life of an artist" talk or name dropping. It is storytelling at it's best. I am very impressed with *Special Deluxe*, even with the car talk.

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## **Mark Jones says**

Life: 4/5. Cars: 2/5.

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## **Mary says**

Audio. I really enjoyed this book and I really enjoyed hearing it read by the author. The tone felt refreshingly honest. A pretty normal guy who's led a pretty interesting life telling stories about some of the things he is passionate about, including cars and climate change.

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## **Sharry says**

I experienced some trepidation prior to reading this book. I had enjoyed Neil Young's first memoir, "Waging Heavy Peace," despite the absence of any sort of chronological order and his repetitive remarks about Pono. His unique voice came through loud and clear. I was worried that "Special Deluxe" might contain too many



technical details about cars that would bog down the narrative.

I needn't have worried. I was totally charmed by Neil's follow-up memoir. This time around his story is told in a more cohesive manner with Neil's own tracings/watercolours of cars complementing the text. Each car serves to trigger certain strong memories Neil retains from the past. A significant number of these memories pertain to his earliest years when he first became fascinated with cars, mainly for their unique designs. Neil's dogs are also mentioned quite prominently throughout the text, especially in relation to his memories about certain cars.

We travel on a journey with Neil until he reaches an "a-ha" moment when he realizes that he's being a hypocrite for driving large gas-guzzling old cars that emit far too much carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. He starts to seriously consider alternative forms of energy. This leads into the story of LincVolt and his ongoing commitment and concern for the environment.

Neil doesn't delve too much into his musical history, although there are some deep revelations expressed on a number of different levels. His current interests are clearly illuminated and it ties in neatly with the narrative throughout.

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