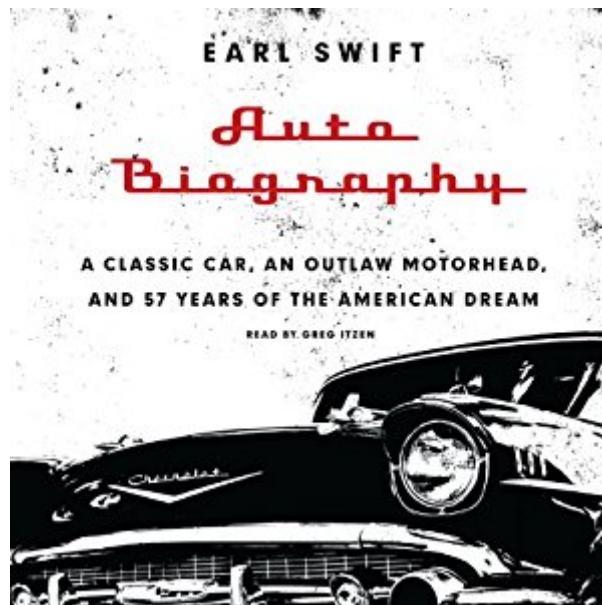




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Auto Biography: A Classic Car, An Outlaw Motorhead, And 57 Years Of The American Dream



Synopsis

A brilliant blend of *Shop Class as Soulcraft* and *The Orchid Thief*, Earl Swift's wise, funny, and captivating *Auto Biography* follows an outlaw-genius auto mechanic as he painstakingly attempts to restore a classic 1957 Chevy to its former glory - all while the FBI and local law enforcement close in. To Tommy Arney, the old cars at Moyock Muscle are archeological artifacts, twentieth-century fossils that represent a place and a people utterly devoted to the automobile and transformed by it. But to his rural North Carolina town, they're not history; they're junk. When Tommy acquires a rusted out wreck of an old Chevy and promises to return it to a shiny, chromed work of American art, he sees one last chance to salvage his respect, keep himself out of jail, and save his business. But for this folk hero who is often on the wrong side of the law, the odds of success are long, especially when the FBI, local authorities, and the bank are closing in. Written for motor heads and automotive novices alike, *Auto Biography* interweaves this improbable hero's journey with the story of one iconic car to chart the rise, fall, and rebirth of the American Dream. Told in words and eight pages of photos, this wise, charming, and heartbreaking true story is an indelible portrait of a man, a machine, and a nation on the road from a glorious past into an unknown future.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is for somebody who's a car person. Or, someone interested in post world War two American history. Or wants some context on how our fast economy and focus on marketing gave the Japanese a window to enter the market with quality. Or tangentially, how the automobile has

helped shape American communities. Or for someone interested anecdotally in how cars can both reflect and influence who at are at times. interwoven with a story of a misfit is a tale about the various people who've possessed a car throughout generations, and how they are at once unique and united through a common love. I'm an easy target to be honest, I love cars and am interested in the other things I listed above. In fact, even before I heard of the book I've felt the particular model of car the story follows is the most beautiful in the world. But trying to be objective, the writer does a great job interweaving American stories that probably will stand as a great piece of journalism even if you don't care at all about cars.

If you are a car person or even interested in old cars, Earl Swift had written a masterpiece. Dealing with both the restoration of a 57 Chevy wagon, Earl traces the history of the car through 16 owners. This book has special meaning to me as it is centered around Norfolk and discusses many local establishments, primarily Moyock Muscle. As I live in the area and have actually been to Moyock Muscle a few times, this was special. Perhaps the most interesting portion is the portrayal of Tommy Arney, a Norfolk legend. Should you be one of those people who are offended by cussing and such, this is NOT the book for you. VBD

This book is based on a really interesting idea, tracing the history of several People through the history of a car they all have owned or been involved with. It provides a lot of insight into cars, which is great for us car nuts, but also into the social history of the middle class as well as how people overcome or don't overcome the events of their lives. However it does go on a bit as one personal mini-biography follows another, it feels as if the writer is maybe sticking too much to a formula in order to stay authentic, so I started skipping some paragraphs after a while. However anyone who's got their hands dirty on old cars will enjoy this read, recognize a lot and also learn something new.

I expected a great story after hearing the author at a book festival in my hometown. What blew me away is the quality of the writing. Mr. Swift has a gift for the turn of a phrase. I found myself reading section after section of the book out loud to my wife. For example, he describes how the rust is blasted from the Chevy "Tippit fires up the blaster's motor and gets to work on the firewall, the nozzle issuing a deafening whoosh when he's a foot from his target, a rising shriek as he pushes closer. The nozzle carves a surprisingly narrow path through the old green paint--roughly a quarter of an inch wide--so stripping requires a steady back-and-forth in short sweeps; you clear a block of two square inches, then another, and so on, so that your rate of progress is about equal to coloring

a car with a crayon." Though I am the furthest thing from a motorhead, this book is riveting.

Absolutely the best thing I have read in a while. I think it helps to be an old gearhead, but even those who don't have a love for old cars will enjoy it. I can't wait to finish it so I can start over and read it again. A big tip of the old hat to Earl Swift for such a great read. Next time your in Dallas give me a call at Texas Motor Toys and I will buy you a burger. Sincerely, Bill Hanstrom

My husband bought this book for me because he knows I'm a bit of a gear-head and especially enjoy those Chevys from 55, 56 and 57. This was quite a story and made me wish I'd kept track of previously owned cars of my own. I could have done without the MF word so often, but then that's probably just me and certainly wouldn't have portrayed Tommy to the fullest. It was definitely well researched and I loved the analysis of how US car makers lost their way!

Tom Arney is from my hometown. This was a great read about someone from the Norfolk VA area. Told from the perspective of the car, it was filled with interesting factoids about that automobile; but more about Tom and his journey through life. Includes his brushes with the law and his scandalous behavior in a 20 yr span.

I am not interested at all in old cars. All the ones I have owned have been a pain; however, I wanted to read this book prior to giving it as a gift to a motorhead I know. I was fascinated by Earl Swift's story. I have to admit that I live only about 10 miles from the Moyock business where the Chevy was being restored, and maybe that added to the fascination. I would recommend it!

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