



Oprah: A Biography

By Kitty Kelley

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Oprah: A Biography By Kitty Kelley

For the past twenty-five years, no one has been better at revealing secrets than Oprah Winfrey. On what is arguably the most influential show in television history, she has gotten her guests—often the biggest celebrities in the world—to bare their love lives, explore their painful pasts, admit their transgressions, reveal their pleasures, and explore their demons. In turn, Oprah has repeatedly allowed her audience to share in her own life story, opening up about the sexual abuse in her past and discussing her romantic relationships, her weight problems, her spiritual beliefs, her charitable donations, and her strongly held views on the state of the world.

After a quarter of a century of the Oprah-ization of America, can there be any more secrets left to reveal?

Yes. Because Oprah has met her match.

Kitty Kelley has, over the same period of time, fearlessly and relentlessly investigated and written about the world's most revered icons: Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, Frank Sinatra, Nancy Reagan, England's Royal Family, and the Bush dynasty. In her #1 bestselling biographies, she has exposed truths and exploded myths to uncover the real human beings that exist behind their manufactured facades.

Turning her reportorial sights on Oprah, Kelley has now given us an unvarnished look at the stories Oprah's told and the life she's led. Kelley has talked to Oprah's closest family members and business associates. She has obtained court records, birth certificates, financial and tax records, and even copies of Oprah's legendary (and punishing) confidentiality agreements. She has probed every aspect of Oprah Winfrey's life, and it is as if she's written the most extraordinary segment of *The Oprah Winfrey Show* ever filmed—one in which Oprah herself is finally and fully revealed.

There is a case to be made, and it is certainly made in this book, that Oprah Winfrey is an important, and even great, figure of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. But there is also a case to be made that even greatness needs to be examined and put under a microscope. Fact must be separated from myth, truth from hype. Kitty Kelley has made that separation, showing both sides of Oprah

as they have never been shown before. In doing so she has written a psychologically perceptive and meticulously researched book that will surprise and thrill everyone who reads it.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

The tables are turned on Oprah Winfrey, as celebrity biographer Kelley digs deep to uncover the secrets of the talk show host and humanitarian. Kelley weaves her revelations from interviews with those who knew Oprah best--relatives, former lovers, and coworkers. Kelley's reading is inspired and professional, and her voice brims with remarkable selfassurance, making for a convincing presentation, despite the fact that this is an unauthorized biography. Although Kelly gets a bit breathy at times, she brings things back to the ground with a steady rhythm and energy. A compulsive (if slightly guilty) listen. A Random hardcover.

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From [Booklist](#)

Kitty Kelley couldn't find very many people who like Oprah. Astonishingly, almost everyone she interviewed seems to have a bone to pick with the talk-show host, even Oprah's cousin and father (who might not be her father, after all). Of course, many of those people haven't seen Oprah in a long time; take the insulted woman who threw her a good-bye party when she left her first television job: "That was the last I saw of Oprah . . . she divorced herself from Nashville." Even when Oprah does something thoughtful, like return to Baltimore to spend time with a dying former coworker, she gets bashed for not attending the retirement party of another. As in her previous biographies, Kelley follows a predictable pattern. She gathers lots of information via published articles, on-the-record interviews (often with bit players), and anonymous quotes from those who may or may not be well connected. (Moreover, even the identified quotes are difficult to track in the massive list of source material in each chapter.) She then writes, in rather clunky prose, about her subject, twisting the story to prove her thesis—in this case that, yes, Oprah is a spinmeister and a controlling one at that. Though Oprah's many achievements and her charitable work are lauded, there's usually a but following each positive statement, as Kelley attempts to show again and again that Winfrey's generosity is often self-serving. Typically, Kelley's biographies feature one juicy story that everyone seems to remember. Laura Bush sold dope in college. Nancy Reagan and Frank Sinatra had an affair.

Unfortunately, Oprah seems sadly to lack that signature take-away anecdote. She had an affair with John Tesh? She once ate two pecan pies? No staying power there. Perhaps readers will have to be satisfied with the fact that Oprah's father called her best-friend Gayle King a "dirt hog." And that's on the record. --Ilene Cooper

About the Author

Kitty Kelley is the internationally acclaimed bestselling author of *Jackie Oh!*; *Elizabeth Taylor: The Last Star; His Way: The Unauthorized Biography of Frank Sinatra*; *Nancy Reagan: The Unauthorized Biography; The Royals*; and *The Family: The Real Story of the Bush Dynasty*. The last four titles were all #1 on the *New York Times* bestseller list. Kelley has been honored by her peers with such awards as the Outstanding Author Award from the American Society of Journalists and Authors for her "courageous writing on popular culture," the Philip M. Stern Award for her "outstanding service to writers and the writing profession," the Medal of Merit from the Lotos Club of New York City, and the 2005 PEN Oakland Literary Censorship Award. Her articles have appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Newsweek*, *People*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *McCall's*, the *Los Angeles Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*. She lives in Washington, D.C., with her physician husband, Jonathan Zucker.

From the Hardcover edition.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Alta Valentin:

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