



Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde

By Jeff Guinn

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Forget everything you think you know about Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker. Previous books and films, including the brilliant 1967 movie starring Warren Beatty and Faye Dunaway, have emphasized the supposed glamour of America's most notorious criminal couple, thus contributing to ongoing mythology. The real story is completely different -- and far more fascinating.

In *Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde*, bestselling author Jeff Guinn combines exhaustive research with surprising, newly discovered material to tell the real tale of two kids from a filthy Dallas slum who fell in love and then willingly traded their lives for a brief interlude of excitement and, more important, fame. Their timing could not have been better -- the Barrow Gang pulled its first heist in 1932 when most Americans, reeling from the Great Depression, were desperate for escapist entertainment. Thanks to newsreels, true crime magazines, and new-fangled wire services that transmitted scandalous photos of Bonnie smoking a cigar to every newspaper in the nation, the Barrow Gang members almost instantly became household names on a par with Charles Lindbergh, Jack Dempsey, and Babe Ruth. In the minds of the public, they were cool, calculating bandits who robbed banks and killed cops with equal impunity.

Nothing could have been further from the truth. Clyde and Bonnie were perhaps the most inept crooks ever, and their two-year crime spree was as much a reign of error as it was of terror. Lacking the sophistication to plot robberies of big-city banks, the Barrow Gang preyed mostly on small mom-and-pop groceries and service stations. Even at that, they often came up empty-handed and were reduced to breaking into gum machines for meal money. Both were crippled, Clyde from cutting off two of his toes while in prison and Bonnie from a terrible car crash caused by Clyde's reckless driving. Constantly on the run from the law, they lived like animals, camping out in their latest stolen car, bathing in creeks, and dining on cans of cold beans and Vienna sausages. Yet theirs was a genuine love story. Their devotion to each other was as real as their overblown reputation as criminal masterminds was not.

Go Down Together has it all -- true romance, rebellion against authority, bullets

flying, cars crashing, and, in the end, a dramatic death at the hands of a celebrity
lawman hired to hunt them down. Thanks in great part to surviving Barrow and
Parker family members and collectors of criminal memorabilia who provided Jeff
Guinn with access to never-before-published material, we finally have the real
story of Bonnie and Clyde and their troubled times, delivered with cinematic
sweep and unprecedented insight by a masterful storyteller.

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Go Down Together: The True, Untold Story of Bonnie and Clyde By Jeff Guinn Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #239212 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Simon Schuster
- Published on: 2009-03-10

- Released on: 2009-03-10
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.25" h x 1.50" w x 6.12" l, 1.55 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 480 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Journalist Guinn (*Our Land Before We Die*), in this intensely readable account, deromanticizes two of America's most notorious outlaws (they were never... particularly competent crooks) without undermining the mystique of the Depression-era gunslingers. Clyde Barrow, a scrawny kid in poverty-stricken West Dallas in the late 1920s, stole chickens before moving on to cars, following in the footsteps of his older brother, Buck. In 1930, he met 19-year-old Bonnie Parker, and during the next four years Clyde, Bonnie and the ever-revolving members of the Barrow Gang robbed banks and armories all over the South, murdering at least seven people. Bonnie, who fancied herself a poet, wrote, Some day they'll go down together, and they did, in a Louisiana ambush led by famed ex-Texas Ranger Frank Hamer. With the brisk pacing of a novel, Guinn's richly detailed history will leave readers breathless until the final hail of bullets. 16 pages of b&w photos. (Mar.)

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From [Bookmarks Magazine](#)

All those who read Guinn's account of Bonnie and Clyde were impressed by the unprecedented level of detail he brings to the story. But a few seemed to think that all of Guinn's data got in the way of the chase. The *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* admitted that the level of detail posed the book's "only problem," while acknowledging that "the legend still stands under its own power." Indeed, reviewers were generally pleased by Guinn's ability to add new layers to Bonnie and Clyde's brief, hardscrabble lives and to shed new light on their impulses without weighing them down. Reviewers were particularly interested in the idea of the duo as heroes of the Great Depression, with obvious anxiety that that era might not seem so distant these days. Yes, reviewers are prone to provide enthusiastic reviews for a newspaper's books editor; yet *Go Down Together* is still a strong book. Copyright 2009 Bookmarks Publishing LLC

From [Booklist](#)

Almost 75 years ago, the four-year murder and robbery spree of Bonnie Parker and Clyde Barrow ended in a hail of bullets on a desolate Louisiana road. During those four years, the Barrow Gang held up a few banks, knocked over numerous grocery stores, killed several police officers, and successfully cast themselves as latter-day Robin Hoods struggling against an unjust social order. This work strives, successfully for the most part, to strip away the sensationalism and view the couple and their exploits accurately. Less lyrical than Paul Schneider in *Bonnie and Clyde: The Legend behind Their Lives* (2009), Guinn, an investigative journalist, uses a conventional narrative approach and utilizes primary sources effectively. Here, Bonnie is revealed as a petite, intelligent, but frustrated young woman whose thirst for excitement made her vulnerable to a more worldly and big-talking Clyde. Despite her image as a gun-toting moll, she apparently never fired a shot at anyone. Guinn describes Barrow as an almost comically inept thief who was physically weak, belligerent, and out to avenge himself upon a "system" that he believed mistreated him. For both crime aficionados and general readers with an interest in the era, this book is of great value. --Jay Freeman

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Kimberly Hopkins:

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