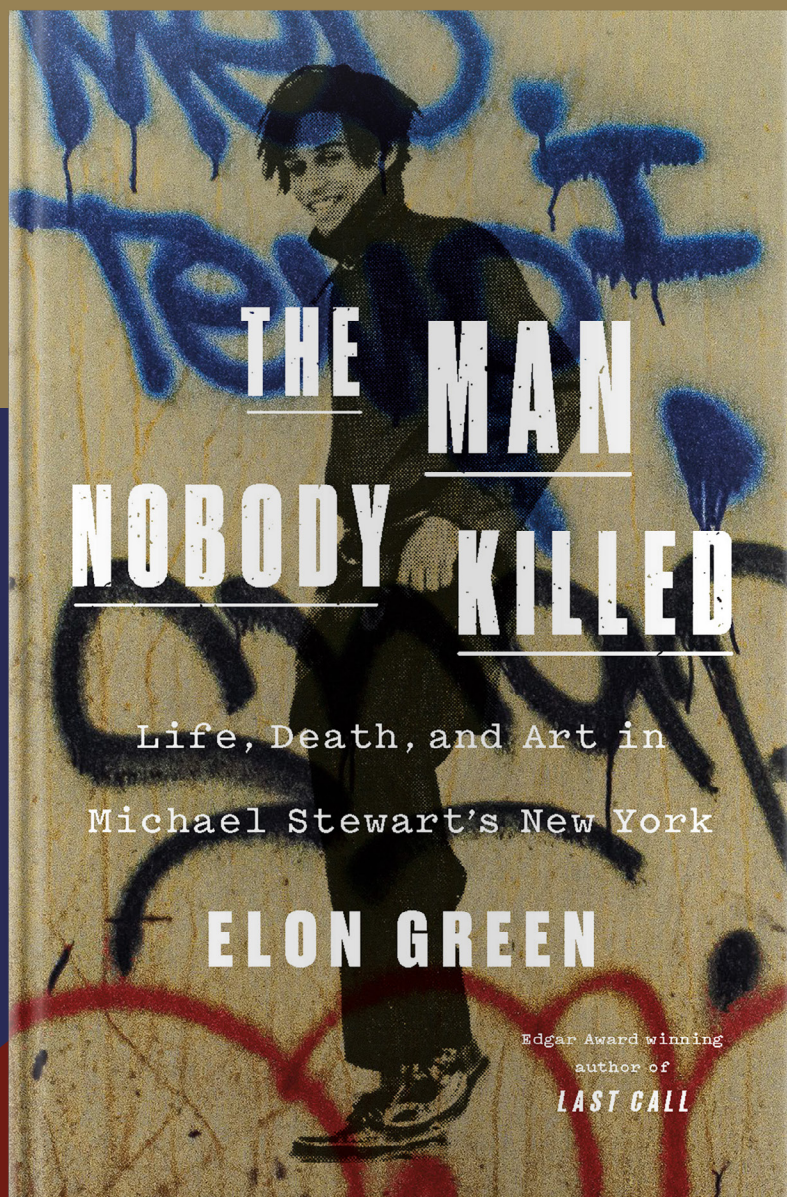


BOOK CLUB KIT



“A long overdue and riveting biography of Michael Stewart; a searing examination of the systemic forces that unjustly took his life; and a kaleidoscopic and luminous portrait of an entire city.”

—DAVID GRANN

author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Killers of the Flower Moon*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1 How does the death of Michael Stewart parallel events today? What, if anything, is different about how the events played out?
- 2 Why do you think the student testimonies were not taken very seriously?
- 3 What do you think Michael's life would look like had it not been cut short? Would he have been as successful as some of his contemporaries, Jean-Michel Basquiat or Keith Haring?
- 4 What was your impression of the chief medical examiner, Elliot Gross? Was he acting in good faith, carrying out his work to the best of his abilities, or was there deliberate malice?
- 5 The *Man Nobody Killed* highlights the media frenzy surrounding the circumstances of this case. How do you think it affected the case? How did it change your impression of some of the people involved? Has the presence of media in high-profile legal incidents changed in the decades since?
- 6 Was grand juror Ronald Fields a concerned citizen who was right to investigate the case on his own, or were his efforts ultimately misguided? Would you go out of your way to independently investigate if you felt there was a need?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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Decades later, Elon Green was able to gain the perspective of many prominent figures from this trial, such as Dr. Gross and Judge Jeffrey Atlas. What role did their retrospection play as you read the book?

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Michael Stewart's death had a significant artistic and cultural impact, from Basquiat to Spike Lee. Do you think art can lead to social change? What are some modern or historical examples of this?

AN INTERVIEW

WITH ELON GREEN



ELON GREEN has written for *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Atlantic*, and *The New Yorker*, and appears in *Unspeakable Acts*, Sarah Weinman's anthology of true crime. *Last Call: A True Story of Love, Lust, and Murder in Queer New York* was his first book and won the Edgar Award for Best Fact Crime. Green was an executive producer on the HBO series adapted from *Last Call*.

When did you first hear about the beating of Michael Stewart by New York City Transit Police?

In January 2022, I found a Wikipedia entry about the incident, assumed at least one book had already been written on the topic, and was pleasantly shocked to find that wasn't the case.

Why do you think it was important to write this book — and tell his story — now?

To some degree, the “now” of any nonfiction book is about sources; when so many key figures are in their 70s or even older — as you'd expect of a story set in the early '80s — you can't slow-walk the interview process. But the story of Michael's life and death is important now because it's never been more relevant and resonant. Most of what's in the book, from the activism to the muddled press coverage to the lack of ultimate justice, could have happened yesterday.

Since this crime happened decades ago, what was your research process for uncovering the details forgotten to history?

The first step was reading every possible newspaper story on the case I could find and creating an 80-page time line of events. From there, I began interviewing people close to the case: witnesses, friends, attorneys, and so on. All the while, I collected documents, video, and ephemera that people had saved pertaining to the case, and I visited libraries and archives that held useful information.

What do you hope readers take from *The Man Nobody Killed*?

Progress is hard-fought but not etched in stone. Incidents can spur great activism, but successes may not last. Ultimately, though, beyond this 30,000-foot view, I want readers to remember Michael Stewart, the life he lived and the life he could have had.

When you spoke with those who knew Michael, what stood out to you most?

What was striking was how little their recollections diverged. I kept waiting for someone to say he was mean-spirited, aggressive, or egocentric on account of his startling looks. But that never happened. He was just a sweet, gentle, thoughtful young man, and not a single person I talked to said otherwise. Ordinarily, this type of uniformity would make me skeptical, but these people didn't know each other and arrived at their judgements independently.

If you decide to adopt *The Man Nobody Killed* for your book club, we would love to hear about it! Please let us know by emailing us at reader@celadonbooks.com or post on social media using the hashtags [#CeladonBookClub](#) and [#TheManNobodyKilled](#).



CELADON
BOOKS

SONG PLAYLIST

- p. 9 "Undercover of the Night" - the Rolling Stones
- p. 16 "Shaking Hell" - Sonic Youth
- p. 17 "Cavern" - Liquid Liquid
- p. 18 "Island of Lost Souls" - Blondie
- p. 43 "Transit Cop" - the Beastie Boys
- p. 44 "Everybody" - Madonna
- p. 57 "(Just Like) Starting Over" - John Lennon
- p. 72 "Legal Tender" - the B-52's
- p. 76 "Tell Me Something Good" - 3 Teens Kill 4
- p. 77 "Temptation" - New Order
- p. 86 "Drum Mode" - Gray
- p. 160 "The Saga of Bernhard Goetz" - Otto von Wernherr
- p. 214 "Graffiti Limbo" - Michelle Shocked
- p. 214 "Hold On" - Lou Reed