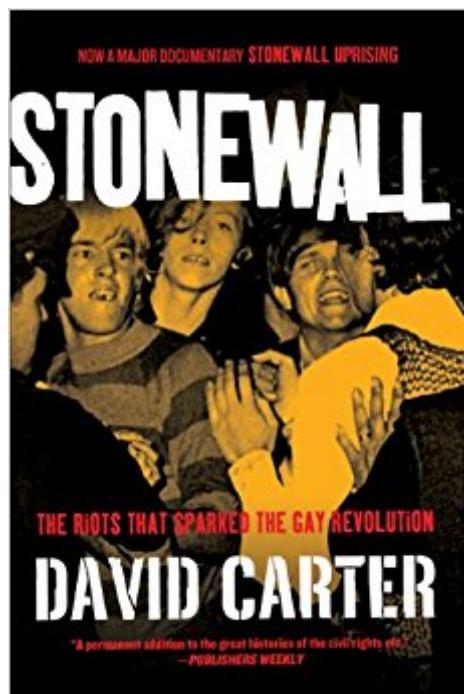


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# Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked The Gay Revolution



## **Synopsis**

The basis of the PBS American Experience documentary Stonewall Uprising. In 1969, a series of riots over police action against The Stonewall Inn, a gay bar in New York City's Greenwich Village, changed the longtime landscape of the homosexual in society literally overnight. Since then the event itself has become the stuff of legend, with relatively little hard information available on the riots themselves. Now, based on hundreds of interviews, an exhaustive search of public and previously sealed files, and over a decade of intensive research into the history and the topic, Stonewall: The Riots That Sparked the Gay Revolution brings this singular event to vivid life in this, the definitive story of one of history's most singular events. A Randy Shilts / Publishing Triangle Award Finalist "Riveting...Not only the definitive examination of the riots but an absorbing history of pre-Stonewall America, and how the oppression and pent-up rage of those years finally ignited on a hot New York night." - Boston Globe

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

While the centerpiece here is undoubtedly his hour-by-hour relating of the explosive June 1969 riots, Carter, an editor of Allen Ginsberg's interviews (Spontaneous Mind, 2001), also provides an extended prelude that highlights the places, activists and others who come to play key roles. Carter's beloved Greenwich Village and what he calls its "queer geography," which enabled gay culture to form, flourish and consolidate itself, emerges as an inimitable, finely detailed hero. But for Carter, the most audacious, energetic and enterprising of riot participants were the drag queens, homeless queer youths and other gender transgressors whose position on the farthest margins of

society enabled their radical response to oppression. What they and others managed to do, Carter renders with fresh care and enthusiasm, getting new quotes and offering unfamiliar perspectives, such as the Mafia's role both as a patron of the gay scene in New York City (including the Stonewall Inn, which it owned and operated) and as a blackmailer of famous homosexuals. He ends appropriately with the emergence of the Gay Liberation Front and the Gay Activist Alliance, as well as the first gay pride parade, held in June 1970. While it may distract readers interested only in the story of gay liberation, Carter's logistical history of what gay author Edmund White called "our Bastille Day" will become a permanent addition to the great histories of the civil rights era. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In the late 1960s, homosexual sex was illegal in every state but Illinois; now the news routinely covers the latest on gay marriages. So the subtitle says it all--or does it? The six days of riots sparked by police action in the early morning of June 28, 1969, against a popular Greenwich Village gay bar, the Stonewall Inn, constituted a homosexual "shot heard 'round the world" that transformed an American subculture. Carter's carefully researched, well-crafted writing portrays Stonewall as part of a larger civil and human rights movement and a spur to the gay rights movement. Stonewall precipitated great change--the formation of the Gay Liberation Front and Gay Activists Alliance, for instance--and that leads Carter to examine the socio-politico-cultural convergence that resulted in the riots. Hundred of interviews figure into Carter's thorough exploration that dispels long-held myths and provides fresh facts about a freedom fight some liken to the fall of the Berlin Wall. Whitney ScottCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The so-called Stonewall riots occurred over a period of a week, perhaps ignited in part by the June 28 police raid having been the second in the same week. (The first was on a Tuesday night). Although I was present that night, and on many of the following nights, I was until last week not aware of this book's existence. Frankly, almost every account I had read previously was misinformed at best. I heard about the book only because I saw an exhibit at the New York Public Library ("1969: The Year of Gay Liberation") and decided to read it. I'm so glad I did. Its one of few works of serious research that also tells a great story. And it is indeed thoroughly researched (and foot-noted) by Mr Carter. Since no one could possibly have been present on Christopher Street for every minute of every night of the riots, this page-turner tells the story as it unfolded. It enabled me

to finally piece together all the events into a cohesive image of a week to remember. I can certainly vouch for the book's accuracy insofar as I recall the events I witnessed in late June and early July. For those interested in the LGBT history, this book is simply indispensable.

In a nutshell, this is a superb account of a key event in LGBT+ history, and is a must-have for anyone who is even remotely interested in how the modern gay rights movement came to be. Carter takes careful time to explain not merely the events of the riots, but also spends time laying out key background information and providing the historical context absolutely necessary to understanding what happened that June. In those first chapters a sense of grim hopelessness leaks out. Following this is an amazingly comprehensive accounts of those fateful nights, detailing not just what happened but showing how; we see in the accounting how the factors detailed in the first section fueled the events in the section, the role the geography played, the weight of anger built up over so many years of persecution. The section that follows, the aftermath and early years of the gay liberation movement, almost feel like a relief - such as when the sun emerges from a particularly nasty storm. The work Carter has sunk into the book shows through clearly - not only the extremely lengthy source lists and bibliography, but the way he directly uses primary material and allows those who were present to speak in their own words throughout. There are twin passions at play here; not only to the importance of the riots, but a passion to be faithful to the reader and those involved and provide an accurate accounting. This makes it clear to everyone that the entire spectrum of the community was involved - although Carter is careful to note that certain groups and individuals played vital roles (the lesbian who fought the police and started the whole thing off, transgendered men and drag queens, and, of course, the gay homeless youths who formed the core of the front lines). Importantly to the casual reader, Carter's writing style brings the participants and events alive. This book isn't just names and dates, a beige chronology blandly recorded in a dull high school history text - these are people; you can feel their fear and hope and anger echoing down to the present, nearly five decades later. I mentioned above a "sense of grim hopelessness" in the first section outlining the historical context - as you approach the nights of the riots, it's replaced with tension, and a palpable sense of rage barely held in check, giving way to cathartic relief and hope in the third section. For anyone interested in the civil rights movements of America, or the gay rights movement, this book is vital; it's our history.

As LGBT rights have become something not to be mocked, but treasured, much mythology has risen up around the Stonewall Riots. Mr. Carter spent ten years researching the events of that week,

interviewing people who were there for an as accurate as you can get history of the event that rocked U.S. history and the world. For any lgbt person who wants to know about their history, Mr. Carter's book is a must-read.

I found this to be a well researched and detailed account of not just the riot itself, but of the gay rights movement that went before and how the riots affected the movement. I found the book well written and fairly easy to read. My one negative relates to having read the Kindle edition. At the end of the book there were photo credits, but the photos were no where to be found in the Kindle version. More important, having now seen a print copy, there were a map of the Village and a diagram of the Stonewall Inn as it was laid out in 1969. Missing the maps was minor, as the street layout of the Village has not changed significantly since then. Even if I did not have personal knowledge of the streets, there are plenty of online maps. But Mr. Carter's descriptions of the interior layout of the bar in some respects depended on the missing diagram! I'd read Martin Duberman's book back in 1993, and have started re-reading it. As history, Carter's book is superior. Instead of viewing the event itself from the standpoint of six individuals, Carter used many viewpoints and sources (including extensive interviews where possible, as well as written records). One thing of note is that Carter does not even mention one of the individuals in Duberman's work. I found an interview where he explains that the person's account varied too much from telling to telling and could not be independently corroborated. There is a rights activist mentioned in the book, some one who was involved with the pre-existing organizations but not at the riots (indeed, I believe he is opposed to non-peaceful protests and at the time was worried about political backlash from the riots). In a short Facebook exchange he mentioned "Both David Carter and Martin Duberman contribute to gay history but in different ways---Carter is an extremely rigorous fact checker--while Duberman is a masterful story-teller."

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