

Steve Jobs bio, candid portrait of complicated man

October 24 2011, by Chris Lefkow



A man looks at a poster announcing the release of the biography of late Apple co-founder and CEO Steve Jobs in Washington, DC. The eagerly awaited biography of Apple co-founder Steve Jobs hit bookstores Monday, painting a candid portrait of a technology visionary who could be as bruising as he was brilliant.

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The 630-page book, titled simply "[Steve Jobs](#)," is already number one on the list of best-sellers for Amazon's Kindle and goes on sale less than three weeks after Jobs died at the age of 56 after a long battle with pancreatic cancer.

Written by Walter Isaacson, a former [managing editor](#) of Time

magazine, the book is the result of 40 interviews Isaacson conducted with Jobs since 2009 and with over 100 [family members](#), friends, business rivals and colleagues.

Published by Simon & Schuster, the authorized biography was initially scheduled for release in early 2012 but its publication date was moved up to November and then to October 24 following Jobs's death on October 5.

The book recounts the now familiar story of how barefoot college dropout Jobs and computer whiz Steve Wozniak began building the first [Apple](#) computers in the garage of the Jobs family home in Los Altos, California, in 1976.

It goes on to describe Jobs's acrimonious ouster from Apple in 1985, his launch of computer company NeXT and animation studio Pixar during his Apple exile, and his eventually triumphant return to the company he founded.

Jobs's second act at Apple, which began in 1996, was arguably the most creative time of his life, a period during which he revamped the Macintosh computer line and gave the world the iPod, iTunes, the iPhone and the iPad.

Besides fleshing out his remarkable professional career with previously unknown details and anecdotes the book provides an intimate portrait of the notoriously secretive Jobs as boss, friend and family man.

The portrayal is not always flattering.

"Jobs at times seemed driven by demons," Isaacson writes. "He could be charismatic, even mesmerizing, but also cold and brutal."

Isaacson attributes Jobs's occasionally callous and even ruthless treatment of friends and colleagues to his drive for perfectionism, a quest reflected in the clean and elegant lines of Apple products.



Former Apple CEO Steve Jobs speaks in front of a picture of himself in San Francisco, California in 2010. Besides fleshing out his remarkable professional career with previously unknown details and anecdotes the book provides an intimate portrait of the notoriously secretive Jobs as boss, friend and family man.

"I don't think I run roughshod over people, but if something sucks, I tell people to their face," Jobs tells Isaacson. "It's my job to be honest.

"I know what I'm talking about, and I usually turn out to be right."

Isaacson said that while Jobs could be cutting and dismissive "dozens of the colleagues whom Jobs most abused ended their litany of horror stories by saying that he got them to do things they never dreamed possible."

Jobs was a renowned and self-avowed "control freak," but Isaacson said he did not seek to exert any editorial control over the book.

Neither did Jobs's wife, Laurene Powell, a former Goldman Sachs trader whom Jobs married in 1991 and with whom he had three children, Reed, Erin and Eve.

"There are parts of his life and personality that are extremely messy, and that's the truth," Powell told Isaacson. "You shouldn't whitewash it... I'd like to see that it's all told truthfully."

In addition to shining light on his personal life, the book provides the first behind-the-scenes story of Jobs's struggle with pancreatic cancer, including the revelation he put off potentially life-saving early surgery.

Jobs ignored the protests of family, friends and his physicians for nine months to try to fight the cancer with a vegan diet, acupuncture and herbal remedies, according to the book.

He eventually underwent surgery in 2004 but the [cancer](#) had spread by that time to tissues around the pancreas.

"I really didn't want them to open up my body, so I tried to see if a few other things would work," Jobs told Isaacson.

The last word in the book belongs to Jobs as he attempts to define his legacy to his biographer.

"My passion has been to build an enduring company where people were motivated to make great products," Jobs said.

"Everything else was secondary."

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