

THE ANDY COHEN DIARIES

▼
A DEEP
LOOK
AT A
SHALLOW
YEAR



By the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Most Talkative*



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I HAVE SOCIAL DISEASE.
I HAVE TO GO OUT EVERY NIGHT.
IF I STAY HOME ONE NIGHT
I START SPREADING RUMORS
TO MY DOGS.

—ANDY WARHOL

INTRODUCTION

In July of 1989, I was a wide-eyed twenty-one-year-old intern at CBS News in week three of a love affair with New York City that rages on to this day. A pop culture obsessive, I got deeply sucked into the summer media firestorm surrounding the publication of *The Andy Warhol Diaries*. I couldn't wait to get my hands on a copy, which reportedly was full of dish about everybody in New York City, and when I did, carried it around everywhere (it was big and heavy) until I'd devoured the whole thing.

I was already a big fan of Warhol's art, but through the book I was completely drawn into his incredibly glamorous world. I grew up in St. Louis and Warhol took me places I'd only fantasized about: inside the White House, downstairs at Studio 54 with Bianca and Halston, under the tent at Madonna and Sean Penn's wedding, traveling by helicopter with Diana Ross to see Sinatra in Atlantic City—eleven years of this stuff! I felt like I was reading a history of exactly the things I cared about—music, art, Manhattan, and all things pop.

The Andy Warhol Diaries came out two years after his death and were a record of over a decade of his daily conversations with his secretary Pat Hackett about what he did the night before, who he saw, and what he thought. His narration is sometimes passive, but on the page he comes off droll and funny, and if you read it closely, there are clear hints of exactly who he was, what he valued, and how he lived his life. The *Diaries* got slammed by some critics as being nothing more than a vapid assortment of name-dropping and celebrity bashing, but to me it read like a pop culture time capsule with an overlay of commentary from a man fascinated by all facets of celebrity.

I'm obviously no Andy Warhol, but I too am intrigued by celebrity and spend most of my nights out in NYC. Twenty-six years after Warhol's *Diaries* ended, I'm now a TV producer and host with my own front-row seat to a world not many get to see, in a city that I love. Now I'm going through today's versions of the doors that I fantasized about opening when I was reading the *Diaries* all those years ago. The city has changed a lot since the days when he was on the scene; it seems to me less glamorous and debauched, but no less fun. For years I have told my stories to friends, and wished I kept a diary. Time and motivation were always an issue, and I needed a Pat Hackett to help me launch and record my own pop diary. I found her in my friend Liza Persky, a seasoned talk-show producer who is used to culling stories from celebrities on the phone, and a friend who got this project off the ground with me by recording the first season (Fall) of this book.

This book is my own take on Warhol's fun concept: a year in my life, in my own words. It's a life in Manhattan, behind the scenes of a late-night talk show, out on the town, with some stops around the world. It's also a love story about a man and his dog.

I wrote this as I would any diary, so there are a lot of first names. Some you'll recognize from my first book (if you read it), some won't need any explanation, a few you might have to figure out on your own. I tried to make that as easy as possible without losing the tone of a real diary. Also I've left the identities of a few people opaque because I don't want to embarrass anyone *too* much—or be sued or fired.

Going back and reading your own diary can be painful—and in doing so, I feel the need for some disclaimers. Sometimes—like life itself—these chronicles are funny, sometimes dishy, and sometimes even a little sad. And sometimes they are really, really shallow. Because sometimes life *is* shallow. I understand that and have accepted it. I hope you will too. Oh, and I drop a ton of names. More names than you can imagine. I literally almost called this book *Diary of a Name-Dropper*. So if you want to play a drinking game while reading this book—and that's not a great idea and only gonna last for so long—take a swig every time you read a name you recognize.

I've often been asked if I would ever turn the cameras on myself and star in my own reality show—this book is about as close as I'll get.

Oh, and one other thing. In my previous book, I wrote about my first visit to New York City in the winter of 1986 with my friend Jackie, and it bears repeating here. We'd been in the city for all of two hours and decided to take an evening stroll. Around every corner, it seemed, was a place I'd seen in a movie. My eyes were wide and lit up as bright as the city before me. Then I saw, coming toward us on Madison Avenue, a thin man dressed all in black topped with a wild white wig. It was Andy Warhol. We screamed. I took seeing Andy that night as a good omen, a sign that I had found home.