



Rivington Was Ours: Lady Gaga, the Lower East Side, and the Prime of Our Lives

Brendan Jay Sullivan

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Lady Gaga's old friend and former DJ Brendan Jay Sullivan paints a vivid picture of the downtown scene from which she emerged.

Brendan Jay Sullivan was an up-and-coming DJ in New York City when he met Stefani Germanotta, then a struggling artist, in 2006. She was a go-go dancer who sewed her own outfits but had bigger ambitions—she wanted nothing less than to take over the music world.

In this intimate portrait of the budding star who would soon catapult to fame and fortune, the author describes afternoons sitting with Gaga on the floor of her bare Lower East Side apartment, drinking wine from pint glasses and plotting out the pop stardom that awaited her.

Filled with stories of love and heartbreak among Gaga and Sullivan and their circle of aspiring musicians and performers, and set against the vibrant backdrop of the downtown bars and parties of the mid-aughts, *Rivington Was Ours* is both a love letter to New York and a glimpse behind the veil of one of the biggest musical icons of her generation.

Rivington Was Ours: Lady Gaga, the Lower East Side, and the Prime of Our Lives Details

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From Reader Review Rivington Was Ours: Lady Gaga, the Lower East Side, and the Prime of Our Lives for online ebook

Ms. Cutts-Byrne says

I won this in a giveaway and expected it to be a fun vacation read, but actually it was better than just a "vacation read". I liked the style of Sullivan's writing- his descriptions and honesty about how the business/lifestyle is.

Jayne Lamb says

A great, quick read, and Brendan Jay (friend of and former DJ for Lady Gaga) can really write. He sums up a gorgeous time in his life, as Stefani begins to make her transformation into Gaga, and it made me feel a little nostalgic for my twenties when everything was clubs and drugs and bands, and things could, you know, REALLY HAPPEN. You don't have to be a huge Gaga fan to enjoy the memoir but you'll get more out of it if you are.

Laura Hill says

Rivington Was Ours
By Brendan Jay Sullivan

Rivington Was Ours, written by Lady Gaga DJ Brendan J Sullivan AKA DJ VH-1, details their life together clubbing on the lower east side the year before Gaga becomes famous. As a former and much earlier denizen of LES, I could relate. Sullivan's stories of late night DJ sessions at St. Jerome's, the Beauty Bar and other quasi-cool dives is wrapped in intimate details of both Sullivan and Gaga's lifestyle, loves, losses and pursuit of their art. I enjoyed reading the book though sometimes it felt like last call at the bar, my mind racing, eyes closing, wishing I could stop but not quite ready to put it down. I liked the storytelling style peppered with honesty that Sullivan layered deftly into his recounting of their late night escapades as they led up to Gaga's release of the smash hit Let's Dance, his abandonment as Gaga's DJ, of his writing dreams and return to the LES, a place you can never go back to. If you like reality with a little grit you'll really enjoy this.

Review by Laura Hill Timpanaro

Trine says

I really really liked it

Jenny Stanfield says

I'm a very biased audience for this book (HUGE Lady Gaga fan) but even being a walking Gaga encyclopaedia this shed a lot of light on her LES era in New York. I had no idea Luc was in a band called The Fame or that Brendan was supposed to have Space Cowboy's role on her first promo tour or that Boys Boys was Girls Girls Girls flipped on it's head.

All of the information lined up and made sense, and the story itself was very well-written. I read it in one day. I did think Sullivan struggled a bit between telling his own story and telling Gaga's and the result was a sort of mangled story of love, loss, and drinking in various bars I have no context for. Nevertheless it was a very interesting and fun read and I would recommend it even if you aren't a Gaga fan.

Hemingleira says

Ok.

Cheyenne Now onto Christmas says

I got a copy of this book before it was released and read it this honestly opened my eyes so much more to lady gaga and how she struggled to get a start in the music world

Jennifer says

I'm not a big Lady Gaga fan at all, but as a NYer who's spent her fair share of nights downtown, I was curious about Sullivan's story. It's a really well written look at the LES nightlife scene and the people in it, and Sullivan's vivid recollections make for a real page-turner. It's easy to get lost in the story and forget, for a minute, that you're not out at the club with Sullivan and his motley cast of friends. It will likely appeal more to Gaga fans than anyone else, but even if you're not into the pop diva, you'll be able to enjoy this entertaining read.

Jin says

I think the part that bugged me the most about this book was how the author seemed to be sucking up to lady gaga through his writing. Also, several metaphors here and there bothered me as they didnt seem to serve any real purpose in describing whatever the author was trying to describe.

Stephen Didier says

This was a very good book about the early after hours bar scene in Lower East Side New York. Its the NYC romantic memoir of a young man when a go-go dancer/stage performer named Gaga collides with his musical nightlife. I came for an insight into Lady Gaga imprint on the LES New York. I came out with a very well written love letter to New York bar/music happenings. If you are or aren't a fan of Gaga this book is worth reading for the journey of life in New York's lower east side in the 'aughties' or mid-late 2000s.

SpinDoctors420 says

Great book!

Kelly Coffee says

The story was a worthwhile fun read, especially because I'm a fan of Lady Gaga. I really enjoyed the simplicity in which the author describes meeting Gaga and how their friendship grew throughout. Sullivan has many heartfelt insights to life, love and music and his feelings read sincere and true, not just for his friendship with someone famous, but with everything he described: his family, being a DJ, his passion for writing and storytelling, the LES.

One of my favorite parts was the childhood story of running away with a lunchbox full of hotdogs - hands down cute, hysterical, couldn't control myself from laughing out loud on the subway.

The issue I had with this book was purely editorial. Nothing is worse than trying to get through a fine story with tons of grammatical and spelling errors. When they're not part of the story or character development (a good example of intentional poor grammar is Jennifer Egan's *The Keep*), it takes away from what is being said because it takes too long to decipher. I work for a publisher and this would never have been approved for publication.

Amanda says

Came here for the Lady Gaga stories, stayed for the love letter to NYC

"The thing about the city is that it's constant and you don't watch the places disappear, you watch as they become something else. It is the same with people in your life."

Scotty Sarafian says

Where to begin, where to begin. First off, I had trouble deciding what I'd rate this book. 3 stars? 4 stars? 5 stars? I chose with 4. Here's why.

I became interested in reading this book mostly because I'm a Little Monster. However, this book struck an inspirational and emotional chord for me not as a Lady Gaga fan, but as an aspiring writer myself. "Rivington" outlines the life of that outcast young adult culture of New York City. If you've ever wondered what Gaga's life was like when she references her past, this is it. This book beautifully illustrates what the 20 somethings of today's world crave: love, success, power, inspiration. You see these themes trail throughout the book. It's eye opening, it's insightful.

Now, let me make it clear: this isn't Gaga's story. Rather, this is Brendan's story where Gaga takes center role. I'd compare it to "To Kill a Mockingbird" in the way that the book is Scout's story, not so much Tom's

(even though the book technically centers upon his trial). His voice is so strong that he plants you right in St. Jerome's and the other New York Clubs. He skillfully wields his words, bringing modern idioms, phrases, and sayings into the world of writing.

Brendan is an amazing talent. The man has a gift for writing. His words are poetic. They're lyrical. They're electric like the beat of the dance club.

My only complaints about this book are the following:

- this book needs another edit.
- Gaga's "character" needs to be fleshed out a bit more.

The first one isn't so much a critique hurled at Sullivan, but more at his editor and publisher. There are numerous typos and examples of clunky, repetitive writing that should've been caught.

Next one is a bit grander. Gaga seems a bit "mythical" in certain aspects. Personally I felt like she should be delved into a bit more in order to get a clearer picture of who she is. The Gaga in the book is the same Gaga that you see in interviews. There aren't many surprises to her "character" or way of being. However, perhaps this isn't a critique at all. Perhaps that was Sullivan's intention. Maybe the Gaga we do see in interviews is the same Gaga that Brendan knows. Maybe she's just always herself; but who knows? Anyway, I guess that's left up for the reader to decide.

Overall, I gave this book four stars because, despite its flaws, Brendan drags you through the emotions and the transitions of his life and his life in the New York nightclub scene. There's a touching moment towards the end when Gaga calls him on the phone in LA after having dumped her boyfriend; at that moment, you feel the emotion seep through your skin. It takes a talented writer to make the reader feel like he's on the other end of the phone. To make the reader slip into the narrator's mind and body.

So, yes. I recommend this book if you're a Gaga fan. I recommend this book if you're a music fan. I recommend this book if you're in your 20s and not really sure where you're going in life. Sullivan is a talented writer capable of crafting a landscape that will entrance and inspire his readers. Recommended!
