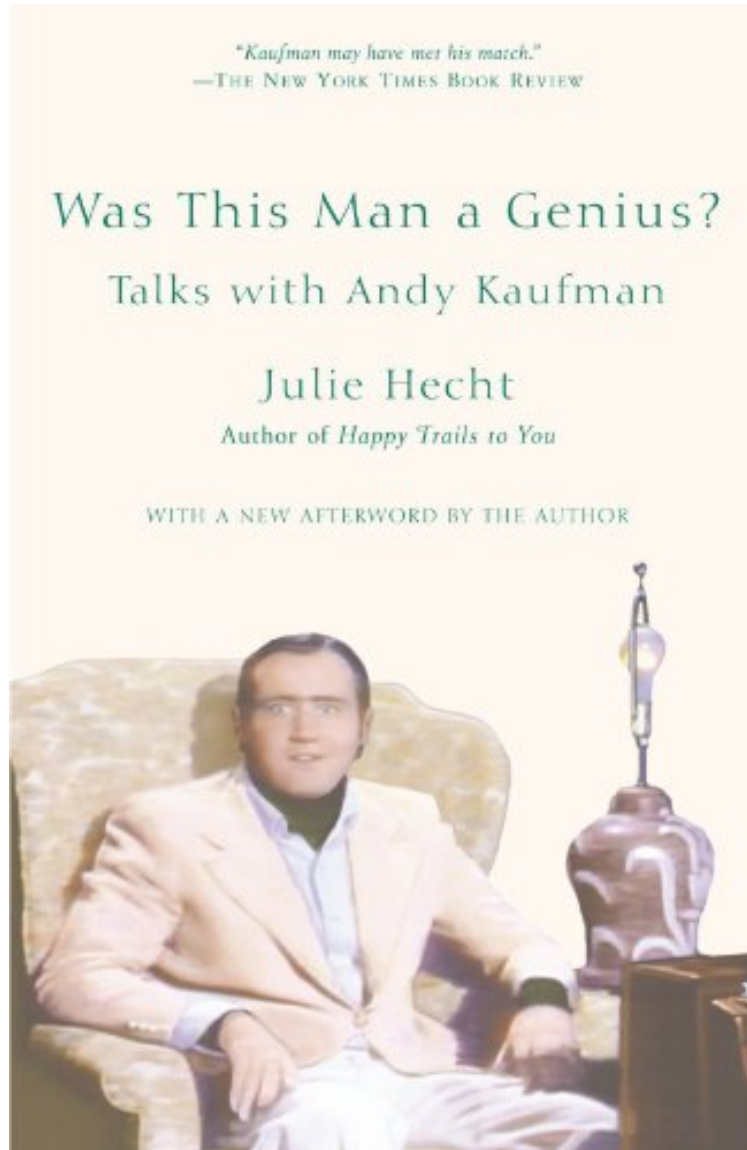


[Free and download] Was This Man a Genius?: Talks with Andy Kaufman

Was This Man a Genius?: Talks with Andy Kaufman

Julie Hecht

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Julie Hecht : Was This Man a Genius?: Talks with Andy Kaufman before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Was This Man a Genius?: Talks with Andy Kaufman:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Insight into Man who was Strange, Totally Unique ComicBy Renee ThorpeJulie Hecht followed Kaufman around sporadically over a couple of years, trying to nail down some facts about his inspiration, his life, for Harper's.Kaufman did appear to have some affinity for Hecht, in contrast to her report of another press interview she witnessed, hanging around for her own time with the performer.This stripped-

down book is almost the word-for-word transcripts of those furtive interviews. Sitting down with Hecht at diners, grabbing a taxi together, Andy let down his guard just enough times to offer up interesting facets of who he was. The interview Julie has with Kaufman's mother is creepily illuminating. Many revelations for the careful reader. I found it engrossing. Perhaps best enjoyed by readers willing to set aside everything else they've read, concluded about the man. 2 of 4 people found the following review helpful. What's really genius By Erinis how anyone could manage to sell a book that is written so dryly and with so little flare about a man who was all about flare. This book, while it's interesting to read about real Andy experiences, does not do the artist any service. It's text-book dull, though fortunately not nearly as long. I believe this is a valuable book. However, it could have been executed SO much better by the author. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. For Andy Kaufman biographers, ardent fans and even casual fans By Danarose Crystal REVIEW: WAS THIS MAN A GENIUS? By Julie Hecht I say this book is essential to anyone writing a biography about Andy Kaufman, or to an ardent fan. It has original material you won't see anywhere else. Andy appeared to be real with her, and she got exclusives. This book is a compilation of her year and half interview-in-depth with Andy Kaufman. This covered the period in which he attended a High School reunion, spoke at a high school, and at Carnegie Hall, and took everyone out for cookies and milk. She details her talks with Andy where he discusses some of his favorite esoteric authors, and how he doesn't enjoy traditional comedy. She interviews his family members (his mother, father and sister) who give their take on things. She tells us about herself, too and it seems that she is annoying at times, because she not only does NOT appreciate The Twilight Zone, and Rod Serling in particular, she is insulting --the dummy!-- but at least we see where she is coming from); and the conversations with Andy about authors he likes and she does not (Jean Shepard, Hubert Selby, Jack Kerouac) and entertainers (Elvis Presley, Buddy Rogers, Steve Allen and he probably liked David Letterman, too). Andy liked Ms. Hecht so much he even revealed his interview techniques, schooled into him by his publicist he bragged to Ms. Hecht how previously, he did not know to do an interview, but that now I have it down to an exact science: he tells how he always made 5 certain points in each interview that he works as a busboy as The Posh Bagel; The Huey Williams Story, the novel he is writing and wants to make into an epic 4-hour movie someday; how he will wrestle any woman; he talked about a girl in Junior High he was in love with and wanted to get together with (yet he admitted to Julie Hecht that he still kept that as his interview topic, even after it was a dead issue because he actually did meet her, and they had nothing in common; but because it worked so well for interviews and the public image he was crafting, he kept it as part of his publicity package!); and the rest of the points got lost because the 5 main points were spaced out across several pages. But his reason was that he was trying to portray himself as so intriguing that the public would demand ABC air his special Uncle Andy's Funhouse as I recall, when they finally did air it, it was late-night at 11:30 pm. I was angry that I had missed it. I finally got to see it on PBS, but it was cut down to an hour. Later I saw it at the Museum of Broadcasting in Beverly Hills as a tribute to Andy. This is also worth seeing, and BTW, Pee Wee Herman did not get his idea for Pee Wee's Playhouse from Andy, Pee Wee refuted that in an interview with AV Club. He did not need to get written permission from Andy that was an idea many comics used in some form, and as it is a parody of a popular form of television, it is not copyrightable. This interview was printed in part, in "The New Yorker" magazine and can be read online. The book is even better, with more to read.

Just as Andy Kaufman subverted traditional forms of comedy, Julie Hecht, with her deadpan wit and highly original style, subverts the traditional form of the profile with her acclaimed nonfiction book, *Was This Man a Genius?*, reissued in trade paperback. Following Andy Kaufman from an appearance at his old high school to performances at Town Hall and Carnegie Hall Julie Hecht talked with the entertainer during 1978 and 1979 whenever he came to New York City. She withstood nerve-racking experiences: at a party for Kaufman at his parents house, on a visit to his childhood bedroom packed with bags of his teenage poems and Elvis clippings and as a passenger in a car he drove, no hands, while singing and trying to dance to radio music at 3 a.m. on an icy road. She was able to discover the truth behind the stories Andy Kaufman made up for interviewers and to discover the secret of his inspiration. What made you finally tell me all this? Hecht asked him at the end of their last meeting. Because you persevered, he said. This is a book of bizarre incidents and frequently hilarious conversations between one of our most fascinating performers and a writer of short stories who found the story of Kaufman's life and work to be out of this world and worth the trip. It will entertain the many fans of both the author and her subject, and through its surprising dialogue and surreal encounters, it paints an intense portrait of Andy Kaufman and explains how he came to do what he did.

From Publishers Weekly In 1978 and 1979, short story writer Hecht (*Do the Windows Open?*) conducted sporadic, often frustrating interviews with the comedian Andy Kaufman for an intended Harper's magazine profile. Harper's deemed the piece "too strange" to publish; 20 years later, those interviews now appear in this odd volume. In 1978, Kaufman was a regular performer on *Saturday Night Live*; in the next year, he would originate the role of Latka on the sitcom *Taxi*. Hecht's first encounter with Kaufman was not auspicious: driving Hecht and collaborator Bob Zmuda to Manhattan from his hometown of Great Neck, N.Y., Kaufman took his hands off the wheel and began clapping along to the music on the radio. After he refused to attend to the wheel, Hecht demanded that he stop the car and let her call

a cab. Later exchanges were similar, with Kaufman unwilling to play anything straight. Most of *Was This Man a Genius?* consists of transcripts of Hecht and Kaufman's conversations, where Kaufman comes off by turns petulant and nave, obsessed with meditating and taking vitamins and perpetually making passes at the married Hecht. Though this approach vividly renders Kaufman's personal strangeness, the bickering grows tedious, and Hecht's general lack of explication doesn't help she doesn't even attempt to answer the question posed in the book's title. (Apr.)Forecast: Advertising in the *New Yorker*, which has published many of Hecht's short stories, may yield a few sales. Still, coming so far behind Zmuda's *Andy Kaufman Revealed* and Bill Zehme's *Lost in the Funhouse*, and containing little new information, the publication of this tedious biography seems almost as puzzling as the performer himself. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.From *Library Journal*Between 1978 and 1979, short story writer Hecht (*Do the Windows Open?*) conducted informal and often exasperating interviews with Andy Kaufman, the "comedian" he hated the term, much preferring "song-and-dance man" who was then next to unknown. The resulting 150-page manuscript lay unpublished until Kaufman's posthumous reputation prompted Hecht to brush it off, polish it up, and submit it to Random House. Initially caught off guard by Kaufman's zaniness, Hecht becomes, in the course of the intermittent, year-long conversations, an increasingly wary interviewer who lets readers draw their own conclusions. From a performance at New York City's Town Hall to an appearance on *Saturday Night Live* to a performance at his high school in Great Neck, Long Island, to his famous show at Carnegie Hall, Hecht traces Kaufman's early progress. To some observers and fans, Kaufman may well be a comic innovator. To many who read this book, he may appear as he did in the recent movie *Man on the Moon*: a pathological liar with a cruel streak. Recommended only for libraries with large entertainment holdings. Charles C. Nash, Cottey Coll., Nevada, MO Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc.From *The New Yorker*In the seventies, the author repeatedly attempted to interview the late Andy Kaufman, and fell prey to the confusion of life and art that marked his peculiar talent. Here Hecht returns the favor: in this account of her comic ordeal, she has created for her eccentric subject a final act. Copyright 2005 *The New Yorker*