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News



News

Jim Carroll goes beyond "Basketball Diaries"

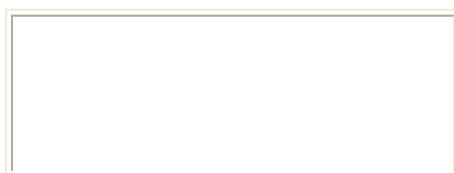
By **Tim Inklebarger**
Star Reporter

After a decade-long battle with heroin addiction, several best-selling books of poetry and a critically acclaimed rock band in the early '80s, Jim Carroll's punk rock rŽsumŽ is unrivaled.

Although Carroll was scheduled to read from his best-selling novel, *The Basketball Diaries*, when he visited SWT Tuesday, he strayed from the itinerary and presented the audience with poetry and other short works of fiction.

In a fragile voice with a thick New York accent, Carroll addressed the crowd with his contempt for the blazing Texas heat.

"Heat doesn't work well with me," Carroll said. "When I stepped out of my hotel room, I thought I'd explode."



Arriving fashionably late to the event, Carroll read a prose piece from his second novel *Forced Entries* -- often referred to as the sequel to *Diaries*.

University Star Online Poll

Is the company that owns Joe's Crab Shack justified in suing the University on the grounds that the fenced dam is driving away customers?

- Yes! Go Joes!
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Yesterday evening, many students gathered at the LBJ Student Center while Jim Carroll read many of his poems.

**Ashley A. Horton/Star
Photo**

In his first excerpt, Carroll described an experience with venereal crabs. Carroll described delicately choosing a contender for what he called a 12-inch foot race at the request of his girlfriend Jenny-Anne.

Setting the "buggers" loose for a 23-minute marathon, Carroll said they placed a pubic hair at the end as an incentive to finish.

"What a woman, who can turn an ailment into a viable recreation,"

Carroll read. Carroll said he wrote *Forced Entries* shortly after deciding to kick the heroin habit. He described the time as, "four years of heavy oblivion."

After searching through a notebook of dog-eared papers, Carroll flashed back to his days working in the avant-garde poetry scene in New York City in the late '60s.

Carroll expressed his distaste for performance art that was, "popping up around the scene."

While working at St. Martin's church -- a main venue for poets and artists of the day -- Carroll gave a performance art show he called "Tiny Torchers." In his piece, Carroll released a cockroach onto the floor and proceeded to spray it with Raid roach spray.

Though Carroll intended to chastise the crowd for its willingness to accept almost anything as an art performance, critics praised him, calling it, "a non-verbal demonstration on the horrors of Vietnam."

Later in the evening, Carroll read a poem about the late lead singer of the band Nirvana titled "8 Fragments of Kurt Cobain."

Carroll read, "genius is not a generous thing," and described the "hungry faces" that can be seen from the crowd.

"Pressure: that's how diamonds are made," Carroll read.

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At the end of the poem, Carroll asked if the rock star considered the thought that he would never write again.

A few days after Cobain's 1994 suicide, Carroll read the poem on MTV's "Unplugged."

Fragments was later published on Jan. 1 in the New York Times.

Continuing with the dead rock star theme, Carroll read a letter he found in a recording studio where rap artist Tupac Shakur was cutting an album.

"The titties is boomin'," Shakur wrote to a German fan who sent a nude photograph to the singer.

"P.S. send more pictures. I want a whole row to tack up on the tour bus," Carroll read from the letter. "Also, consider getting a nose job."

Carroll is most widely known for his 1978 novel *The Basketball Diaries*, although he did not read from the text.

Diaries chronicles Carroll's turbulent coming of age in New York City's Lower East Side during the 1960s. Carroll became an instant prodigy on the basketball court, but he soon fell into a life of substance abuse.

Eventually trading in his gym sneakers for a needle and syringe, Carroll found himself a strung-out junkie on skid row. It was there that he discovered his passion as a writer.

Loosely based on Carroll's autobiography, the book was made into a 1995 film starring Leonardo DiCaprio as Jim.

After kicking his drug habit in the late '70s, Carroll left New York and started The Jim Carroll Band. Shortly after the shooting death of John Lennon in 1980, Carroll's song People Who Died -- from his debut album *Catholic Boy* -- became an overnight radio hit.

The band went on to produce two more LPs in the early '80s, and Carroll has independently recorded several spoken-word poetry albums.

Aside from his work as a musician and writer, Carroll has also published several books of poetry including his most recent, *Void of Curse*, in 1998.

Carroll has drawn standing room only crowds at his university appearances across the country.

"We try to tap into what's going on in the entertainment industry," said Erica Newman, SACA Vice President of Liaisons, in reference to her organization's choice of speakers.

Carroll's appearance at SWT is the first of many events this semester sponsored by SACA.

In addition to speakers and live musical performances, SACA also sponsors movie nights and other events such as Cricketfest in October.

next article

Sign language classes only to be offered through ACC

By Carlos M. Christianson

Star Reporter

SWT students interested in taking American Sign Language as a foreign language will have to travel to Austin Community College to get the hours they need.

Dr. A. R. Mallard, a professor and chair of the department of communication disorders, said the decision to move classes to the ACC campus was due to the inability of SWT to effectively teach the program.

"Students taking American Sign Language classes at ACC can get a better educational experience," Mallard said. "It has a larger facility for the sign language program and a larger faculty to teach the classes that we don't have."

According to a copy of SWT's contract with ACC, the community college will offer the equivalent courses of the university. The document went on to say, "SWT will agree to accept American Sign Language courses in transfer as if they were taken at SWT for students wishing to use it for foreign language credit."

The contract continued by pointing out that students enrolled in the courses at Austin Community College will be considered ACC students, and they will be subject to all the rules,