

THIS DELUXE SIGNED EDITION OF

**DEAD END YELLS  
WEDDING BELLS  
COCKLE SHELLS  
And DIZZY SPELLS**

IS LIMITED TO 1000 COPIES.

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## FOREWORD

The book you are about to read has been referred to as the Holy Grail of Hollywood autobiographies. The reason for this moniker? Well, for one thing, scarcity.

My father published his memoirs through a vanity press; a mere 1,000 copies were printed. If you have an extra \$600 – \$1,800 in the cookie jar, you can purchase one of my father's books on Ebay or through a collector of rare books. But not that many people I know can afford to drop that kind of dough for a 111-page book. Thus the reasoning behind this limited edition re-print of *Dead End Yells*.

The retail cost of *Dead End Yells* at the time of the book's release? A whopping \$3.75! I know of no other celeb autobiography which is being sold at over 200 times its original retail cost a mere 38 years after its initial publication.

Stories of how rabid fans have acquired my father's notorious collection of wry personal anecdotes abound. I've heard it all. One fan literally starved himself for 30 days, having spent his entire budget for a month's living expenses on a rare copy of *Dead End Yells*.

Another fan emailed me that many years ago he checked a copy of *Dead End Yells* out of his local library and then simply kept it. He figured that the \$80 'lost book fee' was a steal (no pun intended).

So, other than the fact that existing copies of *Dead End Yells* are on the endangered species list, what's the big deal about this book?

Well, I can't say that I know all the reasons for the fervor. I recall, as a kid, seeing piles of these books in battered cardboard boxes stuffed into every available closet in our Northern California ranch house. They didn't seem all that valuable then. Now that I think about it, I wish I'd grabbed a box or two. What did I know?

Some fans have suggested that the value arises from the book's unparalleled originality. I would have to agree. Hell would freeze over before any reader could find a single celeb pan & scan bio to match the wit bursting from the Dead End Kid's unvarnished memories; his serendipitous rise to stardom and subsequent roller coaster ride through over 90 films, four movie studios, five marriages, three kids, and his relentless relationship with booze. And, of course, *Dead End Yells* sizzles with the inimitable wit and humor of the Dead End Kid himself.

Are all the anecdotes true? Who knows. They've passed into legend now. To critique the book on that basis would be like having a debate over whether Superman could really fly.

I read many other biographies (Goldwyn, Bogart, Cagney, etc.) while researching my own book, *Me And The Dead End Kid*. I found many of my father's stories corroborated, not only in other celeb bios, but in newspaper and magazine articles, as well.

Having grown up with the Dead End Kid, I can testify that there were many more harrowing stories that were not

included in Dad's memoirs. Some of the 'deleted scenes' from Dad's book would make his notorious autobiography look like Dr. Seuss.

As far as I know, *Dead End Yells* was not widely promoted. Any author will tell you that selling a book without marketing and promotion is like trying to drive from Los Angeles to New York on one tank of gas. I've heard a radio interview or two where the book was mentioned by the host. But, by that point in my father's life, marketing his autobiography was most likely the furthest thing from his mind. I have a feeling that once he had written it, he simply moved on.

My father never spoke of his book to us children. My sister Brandy Jo was present when the books first arrived at the ranch and participated in a memorable celebration, recounted in her chapter notes at the end of this volume. I myself would never have known he was writing it except that, on one or two occasions, I wandered in and spotted wads of onion skin paper crumpled up and scattered all over the avocado-green shag carpet of Dad's office. A Corona typewriter sat on a lone card table against the wood-paneled wall. The ubiquitous fifth of Hill & Hill bourbon stood at attention on his oak dresser, ready for service at a moment's notice. And there was Dad, pacing around his office in his boxer shorts, muttering and laughing to himself.

If you're looking for startling disclosures or profound insights into Leo Gorcey, the man, your best bet is the inclusion of a sampling of my Dad's poetry at the end of this book. My dad always wanted to be a writer, a desire that would never come to fruition for many reasons. The man behind the legend will, unfortunately, never be fully known.

I'd say the person who knew Dad the best was his fourth wife, my stepmother, Brandy Gorcey, who, at the time of this writing, is alive and well and doing social work in Central California.

It is most gratifying to see my dad's book back in print. Leo Gorcey has finally made the come-back he always wanted! In addition to the original volume, we have included my sister Brandy Jo's chapter notes, providing insight and context into my father's sometimes baffling observations, plus an additional eight pages of never-before-seen family photographs. Fans once again have the opportunity to share the reminiscences of the Dead End Kid. Just the way dad would have wanted it.

Leo Gorcey was an entertainer—24/7. That's who he was in the movies, that's who he was around his family and friends, and that's who he is in this book. Pure 200-proof Leo Gorcey. Whatever else one may take away from reading *Dead End Yells*, one thing's for sure. Dad's book never fails to entertain.

Happy reading!

Leo Gorcey, Jr  
August, 2004



**AN ORIGINAL DEAD END KID PRESENTS**  
**DEAD END YELLS, WEDDING BELLS,**  
**COCKLE SHELLS and DIZZY SPELLS**



LEO B. GORCEY

AN ORIGINAL  
DEAD END KID  
PRESENTS

Dead End Yells, Wedding Bells,  
Cockle Shells and Dizzy Spells

ANTHONY RESTORATIONS  
THE LEO GORCEY FOUNDATION

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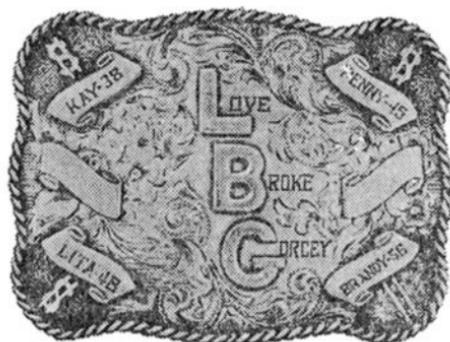
Manufactured in the United States.

It matters not his breed, race or creed;  
No man knows, when he plants the seed,  
If it's destined to grow into a tree or a weed.

You are about to read a simple, cynical story of an actor who has been up and down more times than a yo-yo.

With a great deal of love and respect, this book is dedicated to my many wives whose excuses for leaving me were that they had sacrificed themselves on the altar of love—with my best friends.

I have always figured that if a guy could take your wife away, he was automatically your best friend.



This is a replica of my belt buckle, approximately one half size. It is rather symbolic of my life, and has become quite a conversation piece.

As you will notice, instead of *Leo B. Gorcey* the initials read *Love Broke Gorcey*. The buckle is sterling silver. In each corner is a gold scroll indicating my former wives' names, the date of marriage, and the dollar sign in which all of them were most interested.

You will notice there are two blanks (talk about gluttons) *wow!*



## PREFACE

Noah Webster sobered up one night, jotted down a few notes, and came up with a real sexy book—the Dictionary.

I have made a lifelong study of mispronouncing almost every word he ever wrote. Before I distorted Webster's version of the King's English, I first had to learn it.

In the following story, which is somewhat of an embroilment, I have carefully avoided the use of pedalianistic words for fear that our space-age children would not understand them.

Even Webster was not infallible. For instance, he used up half a page of his dictionary to describe love. I can describe it in capsule form. Love is more of a duty and an obligation than it is fun. Many otherwise normal men have worn themselves out trying to prove to their women that they loved them. I have been worn out several times.



## CHAPTER 1

Just before my fifteenth birthday two events occurred which were destined to rule a good portion of my life: I got drunk, and had my first affair. She was sixteen years old and had married my best friend that very morning. It was his seventeenth birthday.

Celebrating his birthday and his marriage on the same day had proved too much for him, and he had fallen asleep in his father's favorite chair. His virgin wife, who was only about half drunk, beckoned me with a wink and an invitation with her right forefinger to join her on a nearby sofa where she was half lying, half sprawling. Instantaneously I was on her, smashing her lips with mine—we were both fully dressed; her husband, my best friend, was snoring.

It didn't take us two virgins very long to figure out that some material things were blocking our path to love. To the tune of snoring we overcame that problem. Her husband would have had more fun lying in the arms of Morpheus if he had tried his wife first.

After a little groping around and some pushing and pulling I was just beginning to have a real ball, when this untried angel screamed and bit my lip. I bit her back, and she screamed again.

Suddenly I was unceremoniously lifted to my feet. Friend husband spun me around. I guess he heard his wife's screams and decided to come to my rescue.

As I was trying to figure out whether to fight or run, the look of anger left his bleary-eyed face and he half sobbed "How could you do this to your best friend?"

My eyes got real acquainted with the floor before I gulped and whispered, "Sorry."

He walked dejectedly to the bar and poured some of his father's favorite scotch into two highball glasses. His father, a widower, had been called away right after the wedding that morning on a business trip. Since none of us had ever been known to take a drink he had not bothered to lock up the liquor. I was vaguely wondering how he would feel about us kids going on our first bender. As I joined my best friend at the bar, he pushed one glass in my direction and, studying the contents of his, queried.

"Really sorry, huh?"

"Yup."

He smiled wistfully, and raising his glass said, "Well, my father always said it took a good man to apologize, here's to ya."

We finished what was left of the scotch in honor of my apology, then solemnly shook hands. He took my place on the couch as I headed for his chair.

His wife was snoring.

This later turned out to be the only thing they had in common.

Her hair was all scraggly, waggly, and some mascara was running down her cheek. She was also drooling—just a little bit—from the corner of a well-smearred mouth. What a mess.

As I started to doze off in my best friend's father's chair the last thing I remembered was that my lip hurt almost as much as my head.

The next morning, as I was brushing my teeth, I was remorseful. My conscience was hurting more than either my lip or my head, I had broken one of the most important commandments—"Thou shalt not commit adultery." Incidentally, that is one commandment I have never wittingly broken

since, though there are a few others that I ruptured pretty badly.

I decided to take a shower, which did not help a thing except to get me wet; it did not make my lip or my head feel a damn bit better. When I left, the newlyweds were still snoring.

It was Sunday morning. I decided to go to church and make a pledge that drinking and lip-biting girls were off my list.

It was a long time before I indulged in either again.