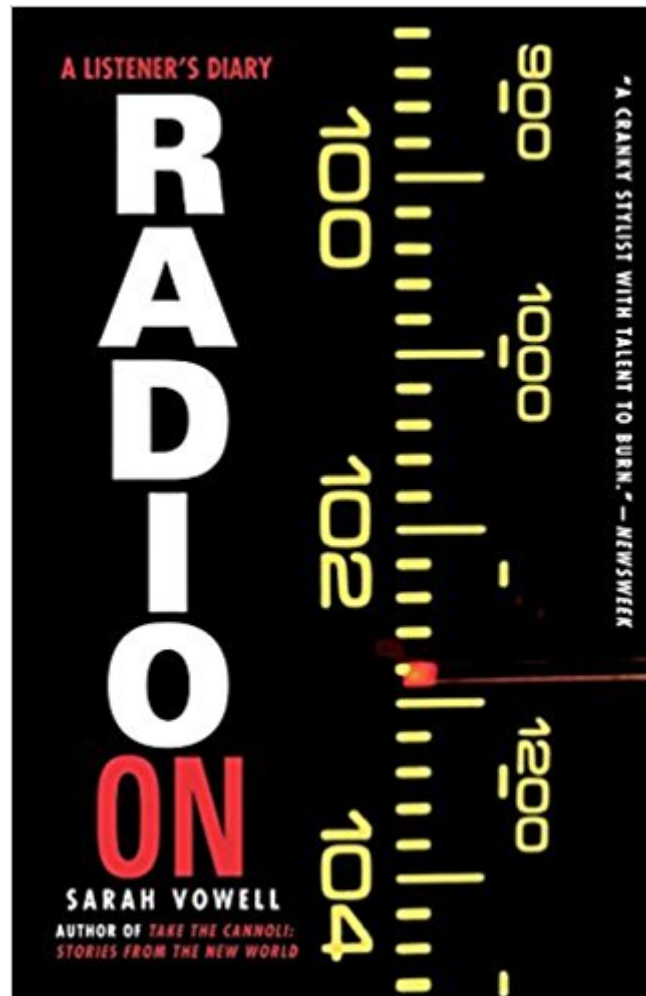




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Radio On: A Listener's Diary



Synopsis

There are approximately 502 million radios in America. For this savvy, far-reaching diary, celebrated journalist and author Sarah Vowell turned hers on and listened--closely, critically, creatively--for an entire year. As a series of impressions and reflections regarding contemporary American culture, and as an extended meditation on both our media and our society, this keenly focused book is as insightful as it is refreshing. Throughout *Radio On*, "Vowell's touch is about as delicate as Teddy Kennedy's after a pitcher of martinis" (Richard Roeper, *Chicago Sun-Times*).

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 2.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (35 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #956,803 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #44 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Radio > Reference](#) #501 in [Books > Humor & Entertainment > Radio > General Broadcasting](#) #3767 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Essays](#)

Customer Reviews

I got this book because I really love Sarah's essays on the NPR program *This American Life*. Those are (largely) collected in her book *Take the Cannoli : (Stories from the New World)*. If you too have come to Sarah Vowell via *This American Life*, I must emphasize: "*Radio On*" is very likely going to disappoint you. The idea for this book is a fantastic one. She keeps a diary largely centered around what the radio is playing at any given time. She sprinkles in liberal doses of real life, thoughts and musings. Unfortunately she seems to view many subjects through a haughty lens of her life as a microcosm of general culture...which it ain't. Sarah has a dismaying habit of aggrandizing or belittling whole swaths of art and entertainment. Nirvana? Fantastic. The Grateful Dead? Boring noodling. NPR? May have once had a golden age, now worthless garbage. Frequently, she casually dismisses a topic/music style/belief/person as worthless, not worth a thought, and then later rants on and on in defense of her opinion. There seems to be no middle ground: something that deserves a gentle ribbing is utterly skewered, something that deserves light praise is idolized. When she does

hear something she deems worthy on NPR, she is quick to turn the radio off before it's spoiled by "snooty diction". Much the same could be said of Radio On: a great idea plus the occasional fabulous insight, spoiled in the presentation by Vowell's "snooty diction." I saw Sarah on David Letterman in support of her much better book Take The Canoli. There was a point where she said something pretty funny and the audience laughed and laughed.

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