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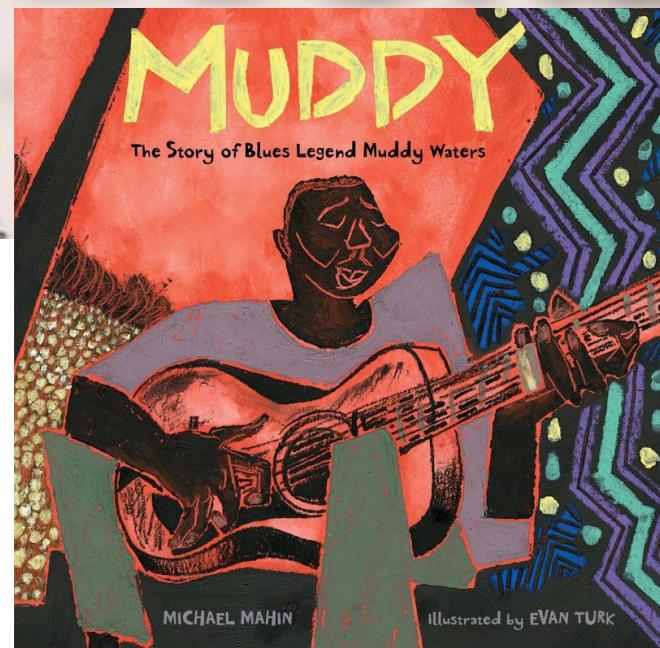
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Book Details

- **Title:** *Muddy: The Story of Blues Legend Muddy Waters*
- **Author:** Michael Mahin
- **Illustrator:** Evan Turk
- **Age Range:** 6 – 12 years
- **Grade Level:** 1 – 6
- **Hardcover:** 48 pages
- **Publisher:** Atheneum Books for Young Readers (September 5, 2017)

- **Language:** English
- **ISBN-10:** 1481443496
- **Product Dimensions:** 11 x 0.3 x 11 inches
- **Genre:** Nonfiction Picture Book
- **Relevant Subject Areas:** American History, African-American History, American Music History, Rock n' Roll History, Blues History, Chicago, the Mississippi Delta, the Great Migration, creativity, perseverance, diversity, multiculturalism, music, guitar



Short Summary:

Muddy Waters was never good at doing what he was told. When Grandma Della said the blues wouldn't put food on the table, Muddy didn't listen. And when record producers told him no one wanted to listen to a country boy playing country blues, Muddy ignored them as well. This tenacious streak carried Muddy from the hardscrabble fields of Mississippi to the smoky juke joints of Chicago and finally to a recording studio where a landmark record was made.

Soon the world fell in love with the tough spirit of Muddy Waters. In blues-infused prose and soulful illustrations, Michael Mahin and award-winning artist Evan Turk tell Muddy's fascinating and inspiring story of struggle, determination, and hope.

Excerpt:

The clack-a-track, steam-blur of an Illinois Central train rocketed Muddy and his guitar into the bustle and buzz of Chicago's South Side.

Chicago was plugged in, turned on, and turned up. And so was its music. Records with electrified guitars and jazzy horns were making the blues jump all over town.

Chicago was the city of the 'Brown Bomber,' Joe Louis, the heavyweight boxing champion of the world. It was the city of the Chicago Defender, the legendary black newspaper dedicated to fighting racial injustice. And now it was the city of Muddy Waters.



Praise and Achievements for Muddy!

- Junior Library Guild Selection, Fall 2017
- “The words and pictures here mix exuberance with melancholy. Mahin’s words have a beat all their own, capturing the lows and highs with poetic verve. Turk’s watercolor, ink, and collage artwork fills pages, exploding with a neon intensity—the equivalent of a dynamic guitar riff . . . Read the book, then get kids the music.” (Booklist, Starred Review, July 2017)
- “Turk’s mixed-media and collage artwork roils with waves of darkness and explosive color, even as it models compositional control, and Muddy is always defined with an electric hue that keeps him in sharp focus. . . . Mahin’s lyricism and rolling cadence make the text a readaloud delight.” (Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books, Starred Review, September 2017)
 - “This poetic celebration of Muddy Waters’ musical truth is lifted still higher by Turk’s extraordinary art.” (Kirkus Reviews 7/1/17)
 - “Lyrically told with a lilting cadence by debut



author Mahin. . . . Turk’s mixed-media illustrations leap off the page. . . . The soul of the blues sings out through the pages.” (School Library Journal July 2017)

- “Like Waters’s music after landing in the Windy City, Turk’s artwork is electric—wild strokes of marker and oil pastel vibrate with energy. And Mahin’s equally vivid writing will almost certainly send readers after Waters’s catalogue.” (Publishers Weekly August 7, 2017)
- “Mahin’s text is engaging, rhythmic, soulful, and written to reflect the blues that influenced Muddy Waters. . . . Turk’s expressionistic mixed-media illustrations, many of them double-page spreads, aptly convey the emotions associated with Muddy Waters’s music.” (The Horn Book September/October 2017)
- “The fact of the matter is that every single year I think Turk’s going to get a medal. I thought it with Grandfather Gandhi. I thought it with The Storyteller. Now I’m thinking it with Muddy, but of those three books, Muddy may have the best chance. Turk’s art perfectly brings to life the legendary blues guitarist’s life. I had my resident jazz expert at work vet the piece and he declared it a beauty. Treat yourself by visiting Evan’s blog where he posts the sketches he made of Chicago’s contemporary jazz scene while doing research for this book.” (Betsy Bird, Caldecott Prediction List, Fuse 8/ School Library Journal)

Short Bio:

Michael Mahin has loved music since his grandmother gave him his first piano lesson at the age of five. He admires people like Muddy Waters who, despite great suffering, find the courage to be themselves in a world that wants them to be something else. Michael hopes his books inspire kids to do the same. He lives in San Diego, California, with his wife, their two children, and several guitars that he wishes he played better.

Kid-friendly Bio:

I've been a musician for a long time. Actually, since my grandma gave me my first piano lesson at the age of 5. Since then I've been a first-chair violinist (in my elementary school orchestra), a last-chair trumpeter (in Jr. Hi), and a lead guitarist and singer in an all-80s cover band! Sadly, my spandex wearing days are over.



Along the way, I also had a blues band, and that's where my love of Muddy Waters was born. The blues has always been a music that resonated with something deep in my soul. I think that's because I see the blues as a transformative medium. As I say in the book, "To have the blues is feel bad. But to play the blues was to take that low-down, skunk-funk, deep-stomach hurt and turn it into something else. Muddy liked that." I liked that, too.

My goal is to write books that inspire children and adults to be more creative, more confident, and more compassionate. I admire people like Muddy Waters who, despite great suffering, find the courage to be themselves in a world that wants them to be something else. As a parent, this is a powerful and important lesson to teach our kids. Maybe the most powerful. In the end, I hope my books balance entertainment with learning by providing stories that are not only fun but that also teach kids valuable lessons about history, dreaming big, and believing in themselves.



Professional Bio:

Michael Mahin is a children's author, screenwriter, and self-confessed wannabe rockstar. His debut picture book, *Muddy: The Story of Blues Legend Muddy Waters* (Atheneum), is about the indomitable Muddy Waters, the blues music legend who's innovative style and sound laid the musical foundation for what would become rock n' roll. In addition to *Muddy*, he is also the author of the forthcoming *Stalebread Charlie and the Razz Dazzy Spasm Band* (Clarion 2018), illustrated by Don Tate, and *When Angels Sing: The Story of Rock Legend Carlos Santana* (Atheneum 2018),

illustrated by Jose Ramirez.

Michael has loved music since he first started taking piano lessons from his grandmother at the age of five and is drawn to stories about real people who have used their own creativity, and especially music, to overcome hardship and make the world a better place. Michael himself went on to play violin, then trumpet, and in college settled on guitar as his instrument of choice. In graduate school, he had his own blues band and until recently, was lead guitarist and vocalist in a well-known Southern California 80s-cover band called Neon Nation.

He hopes his children's books inspire kids to be more creative, more confident, and more compassionate, while also providing parents and educators an entertaining way to teach children about diversity, creativity, and different cultures. He is a #WeNeedDiverseBooks advocate, and believes that studying art and music not only makes kids smarter, but also kinder.

In addition to his children's writing, Michael is also screenwriter. He recently signed an option on an original action-thriller he wrote which will be produced by Jon Karas, Jonathan Kim, and Michael and David Uslan's production company, U2K Entertainment. An original horror script he wrote is also set to go into production in November 2017 and will be directed by cult-favorite Julian Richards.

Michael is also an accomplished educator and lecturer. He has a Ph.D. in American Literature from Claremont Graduate University, was Pi Phi Sorority's 2009 Professor of the Year at San Diego State

University, and is a regular lecturer for the San Diego chapter of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). He actively blogs about writing and dreaming big at his website, www.MichaelMahin.com where he hopes his articles and reviews help writers get more comfortable with the craft and process of writing.

Fun Facts about Michael!

- He has a Ph.D. in American literature from Claremont Graduate University, spent many years as an adjunct professor teaching literature, and was even Pi Phi Sorority's Professor of the Year at San Diego State University in 2009. His areas of emphasis are Postmodernism, American Studies and Literary Theory, which includes expertise in Marxist Theory, African American Criticism, Postcolonial Theory, Feminism, Queer Theory, New Historicism, and Deconstruction.
- He is half-Chinese. His mom is Chinese and his dad, Scotch-Irish.
- He is a preacher's kid and his father was a Methodist minister known for his "Sermons in Word and Song," which turned Broadway musicals such as Fiddler on the Roof and The Sound of Music into modern day parables which he used to teach valuable life lessons. These days, Michael considers himself a humanist and is not religiously affiliated.



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- He has two favorite pairs of shoes: a pair of Star Wars-themed Vans slip-ons and a pair of Peanuts-themed Vans slip-ons.
- He loves to cook! And garden.
- He spent 6 months in China studying Kung Fu and Buddhism while in graduate school. Martial arts is a lifelong love of his.
- He used to be a singer and lead guitarist in a well-known, Southern California 80s cover band called Neon Nation. Sadly, his spandex wearing days are over.
- He and his wife have known each other since high-school and they are the proud parents of a boy (7ish) and girl (5ish).
- He sold his first book with an “elevator” pitch at a Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI) conference.



MICHAEL MATHIN

Children's Author, Screenwriter,
Wannabe Rockstar