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Jim Carroll Dies of Heart Attack

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Punk Rock Poet Jim Carroll Dies at 60



Sara D.Davis, AP

By [Mary Beth Sammons](#)

Jim Carroll, 60, the poet and punk rocker whose autobiography “The Basketball Diaries” depicted a chaotic life shaped by drug abuse, died September 11, 2009 of a [heart attack](#) in his Manhattan home. He passed away while at his desk working, according to Cassie Carter, friend and Web master for his Web site www.Catholicboy.com.

Known for his deeply personal lyrics that combined his poetic sensibility and rock ‘n’ roll, Carroll led a double life -- as a [drug addict](#) and influential leader in the burgeoning rock scene in the 1970’s. However, it was “The Basketball Diaries” that brought him his widest audience. In 1995, the autobiography was made into a movie starring Leonardo DiCaprio. The movie portrayed a tormented Carroll as a slave to his addictions, which started in his teens while he was a basketball star at Trinity High School, an elite private high school in Manhattan. The son of a bar owner, Carroll attended the school on a basketball scholarship -- and at the same time was hooked on heroin.

Though observers say Carroll appeared increasingly frail in the last two decades and continually sought treatment for drug addiction, it is unclear whether his addiction played a part in his death.

Heart attacks happen when blood flow to the heart is blocked, and usually occurs because fatty deposits called [plaque](#) have built up inside the coronary arteries, which supply blood flow to the heart. Each coronary artery supplies blood to a specific part of the heart's muscular wall, so a blocked artery causes pain and malfunction in the area it supplies. Depending on the location and degree of heart muscle involved, this malfunction can seriously interfere with the heart's ability to pump blood.

[High cholesterol](#), [high blood pressure](#), and [smoking](#) damage can damage arteries and contribute to plaque buildup and triggers may include intense

exercise, strong emotion and drug use (such as stimulants like cocaine or [methadone](#)).

The most common symptom of a heart attack is severe chest pain. Many people describe the pain as discomfort, pressure, squeezing or heaviness in the chest. The pain may spread down the left shoulder and arm to other areas of the body, such as the back, jaw, neck or right arm. Pain in the upper belly, often mistaken for [heartburn](#), is also a common sign. Sweating, [nausea and vomiting](#), difficulty breathing as well as feelings of weakness, exhaustion and dizziness are also symptoms. Experts say quick treatment can save a person's life and recommend calling 911 immediately if you are experiencing any symptoms of a heart attack. After you call for help, take one regular-strength aspirin, which keeps [blood from clotting](#), and may help you survive a heart attack.

Health Status of Your Favorite Stars



Rob Loud, Getty Images

42 photos

Ethan Zohn, 2009

"Survivor: Africa" winner Zohn was diagnosed with stage two Hodgkin's disease, a cancer of the lymph tissue found in the lymph nodes, spleen, liver and bone marrow, on April 30. He told "People," "This is the ultimate

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