



# The Trials of Lenny Bruce: The Fall and Rise of An American Icon

*Ronald K. L. Collins, David M. Skover*

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Lenny Bruce's words had the power to provoke laughter and debate-as well as shock and outrage. It was the force of his voice that would place him on the wrong side of the law in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and New York.

Lenny committed his life to telling the truth. But the truth he told infuriated those in power, and authorities in the largest, most progressive cities in the country worked relentlessly to put him in jail. To them, Lenny's words were filthy, depraved. But to his fans-the hip, the discontented, the fringe-his words were not only sharp and hilarious, they were a light in the dark to the repressed society of the early 1960s.

Lenny's battles were fought on stage and in the courtroom-against cops in San Francisco and L.A. who took notes at his performances, against judges in Chicago and against a prosecutor in New York with a zeal to bring the comedian down.

Lenny also fought his addiction to heroin and, at times, his own lawyers. And there were those who never stopped fighting for Lenny-people like Steve Allen, Phil Spector and William Kunstler.

To better understand the power of Lenny's performances, the authors have compiled an audio CD of the routines that got him in trouble, as well as interviews with his defenders and prosecutors, and his friends and followers, including George Carlin, Hugh Hefner and Margaret Cho.

The first carefully documented account of Lenny Bruce's career and free speech struggles, *The Trials of Lenny Bruce* paints a vivid, shocking, hilarious and tragic portrait of a man too honest for his time.

*The Trials of Lenny Bruce* includes a one-hour audio CD narrated by Nat Hentoff that features:

- Lenny Bruce performances (including ones for which he was busted)
- Notorious routines, including "Religions, Inc.," "Blah Blah Blah," "Thank You Mask Man" and "Las Vegas Tits and Ass"
- Interviews with George Carlin, Hugh Hefner, Margaret Cho and others

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