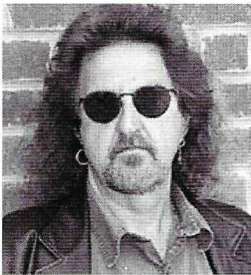


# Don't Shoot! I'm the Guitar Man

By Buzzy Martin

Reviewed by Mansfield Frazier

A reviewer for SFGate.com wrote, "In another life, Buzzy Martin could have been a court jester. Wearing a pair of loose plaid shorts, long hair flying as he pushes a handcart carrying his guitar and a crate of chocolate, he visits classes at Sonoma County Juvenile Hall dispensing jokes and songs."



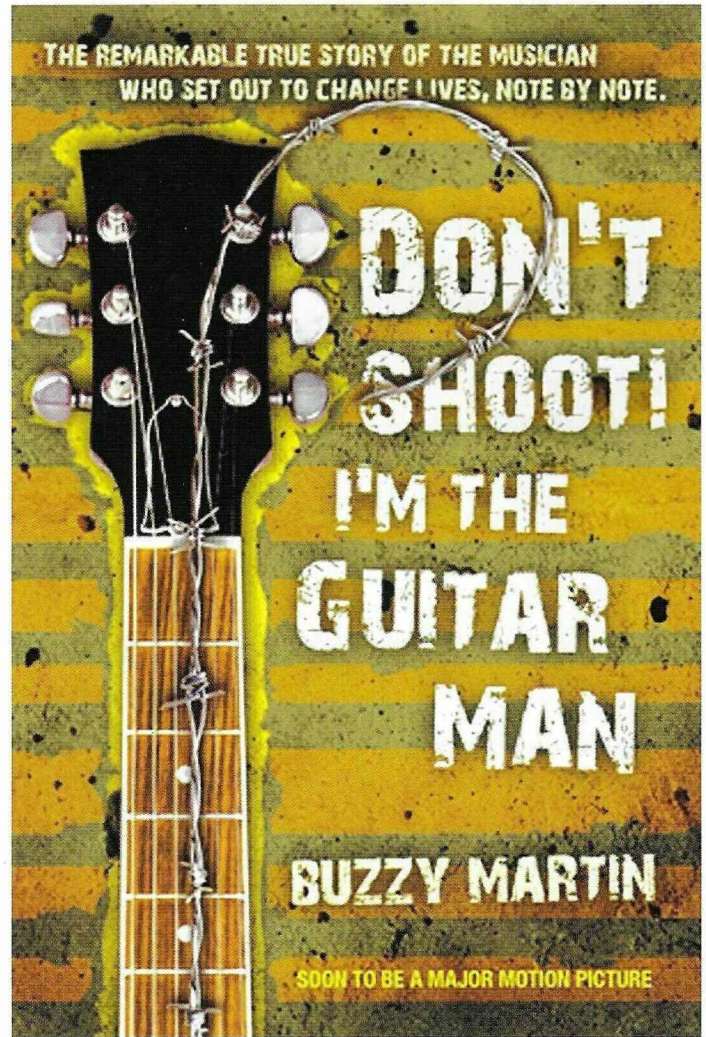
**Buzzy Martin**

But Martin, a lifelong musician, has made it one of his missions in life to bring hope to at-risk kids in institutional settings. And most of them, he says, need something to try to cling to. Abused, neglected, entangled

with law enforcement, it's a tough crowd he plays to ... but he wouldn't have it any other way.

He has written about his experiences behind bars in a new book entitled "Don't Shoot! I'm the Guitar Man." In it he recounts how his experiences with kids lead to a stint teaching a music class inside of San Quentin State Prison. While he was at first intimidated by the brutal surroundings, he soon found that music was a common language between him and the prisoners and he returned to the youth facility with a better knowledge and understanding ... one that he hopes will deter them from continuing with their lives of crime.

"Music makes kids just be kids," said the 49-year-old Martin, a Sebastopol, CA guitarist whose rock group the Buzz Tones has opened concerts for Bob Seger, Leon Russell and Maria Muldaur. "Music is a way to have a little normalcy in your life."



Scott Porterfield, the division director for Juvenile Hall, which holds as many as 115 teens, said Martin's visits, which he had been making for 12 years, fit into an array of programs to help youth find new ways of expressing themselves. Other programs added in the past two years include tai chi, yoga and live performances.

"Since we've started putting these programs together, the incidence of kids acting out negatively or violently has dropped considerably," Porterfield said. "We just hope we can keep them going."

Martin's book is a must-read for any parent struggling with an at-risk teenager; it offers valuable insights from someone who had "been there, done that." Indeed, a parent just might learn enough to keep their own child from heading down the bad road "Don't Shoot" documents in riveting and illuminating detail. RA