

## **JANIS CLEARS THE RECORD**

I wasn't born in New York. I'm not even *from* New York. I just *lived* in New York. People who weren't born and raised in New York never say they're *from* New York. Only people who wish they had been say that. I was born in a Bronx hospital (because it was near my grandmother's apartment). My mom and dad took me, along with my grandmother, back to our South New Jersey farm the next morning.

I changed my name because I wanted a name of my own. I did that when I was thirteen. My family name was just something they handed us when my grandparents hit Ellis Island. I thought picking my kid brother's middle name had more to do with me than that!

I did not graduate from New York's *High School of Music & Art*. I attended classes there for six months, until the principal asked me to leave. I find it stunningly ironic that they now claim me as a "success story."

My birthday is April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1951. (Billie Holiday's was April 7<sup>th</sup>, 1915. I've always taken comfort in that.) I don't know why May 7<sup>th</sup> keeps floating around the Web.

I have a 10<sup>th</sup> grade education, but I did get a GED to make my mom happy years later. She thought I was going to college with it. I didn't go to college. I don't play well with others...

I did turn down Woodstock – though it's possible I was there and just can't remember. I also turned down *The Graduate*. If you want reassurance that you can survive your own bad judgment, read my article ["Monumental Mistakes"](#)

Vance Gilbert is *not* my son by Jimi Hendrix. Or by Richie Havens. "Society's Child" was not written about Vance. Although it's a much more interesting story that way, I must admit.

Yes, I knew Jimi. Yes, I knew "the other Janis." I knew a lot of famous dead people. I don't really like talking about them, though.

The woman who thinks "Jesse" is about a stalker is really, really wrong.

I was, along with Billy Preston, the first performer to sing on *Saturday Night Live*. There was this Jim guy playing with puppets behind a *papier mache* wall, and all I could think was "Good gosh, what have I gotten myself into?!"

When I run with scissors, it's usually with the intention of sticking them in someone's neck.

I've lived in Nashville, Tennessee full time since 1988. It's a kinder, gentler life.

I would rather stay home and write than be on the road. It's not that I don't love performing – I do. I just hate the travel, and the time it takes away from writing.

I'm 4'10". People always say "I didn't know you were so short!" Please don't tell me that. I already know it.

Tina Fey named one of her characters "Janis Ian" in her film *Mean Girls*. I thought it was kind of cool, even though the character is not as tall as I am.

It floats around on line that I was married a whole mess of times. That's not true. I married Tino Sargo in 1978 and divorced him five years later. I've been with my partner Patricia since 1989; we were married in Toronto, Canada in 2003. Just those two. Honest.

My secret dream? To stay home and write full time without spending most of my days doing business.

My second secret dream? To be a famous acoustic guitarist and get to play on everyone's records.

I'm too busy, too much of the time. If I had time and space for hobbies, I'd be a part-time archaeologist, cook, gardener, veterinarian, space jockey. But at the moment, I only have time to be Janis Ian.

I'm really uncomfortable when people bring me expensive gifts (though I would make an exception for a beach house or country estate!!) I read a lot, mostly science fiction and historical fiction. I live for used bookstores. If you want to make me happy, bring me a book.