



Lobotomy: Surviving the Ramones

Dee Dee Ramone , Legs McNeil (Introduction) , Veronica Kofman

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Lobotomy is a lurid and unlikely temperance tract from the underbelly of rock 'n' roll. Taking readers on a wild rollercoaster ride from his crazy childhood in Berlin and Munich to his lonely methadone-soaked stay at a cheap hotel in Earl's Court and newfound peace on the straight and narrow, Dee Dee Ramone catapults readers into the raw world of sex, addiction, and two-minute songs. It isn't pretty. With the velocity of a Ramones song, Lobotomy rockets from nights at CBGB's to the breakup of the Ramones' happy family with an unrelenting backbeat of hate and squalor: his girlfriend ODs; drug buddy Johnny Thunders steals his ode to heroin, "Chinese Rock"; Sid Vicious shoots up using toilet water; and a pistol-wielding Phil Spector holds the band hostage in Beverly Hills. Hey! Ho! Let's go!

Lobotomy: Surviving the Ramones Details

Date : Published September 28th 2000 by Da Capo Press (first published April 1997)

ISBN : 9781560252528

Author : Dee Dee Ramone , Legs McNeil (Introduction) , Veronica Kofman

Format : Paperback 256 pages

Genre : Music, Nonfiction, Biography, Punk, Autobiography, Memoir

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From Reader Review Lobotomy: Surviving the Ramones for online ebook

Ethan says

An enjoyable read for anyone interested in classic punk, the Ramones or mental illness. Dee Dee has a nice relaxed writing style and his tale is so f*cked up that it's hard to put down because you want to see what is around the next corner.

That being said, there are some serious flaws in this book too. Major chunks of time are overlooked and not touched on. Every now and then something or someone is referenced with no explanation or history of the person or location causing me to spend much time look backwards to see what I must have missed only to confirm there was no earlier mention.

Now these would be some major flaws in most books, especially a biography or history, but they are easier to overlook in this one. First, given the drugs and the mental issues Dee Dee was dealing with for most of his life, it's very possible that there are no memories to be recalled. Second, some of the choppiness and confusion that comes with this read actually helps the reader see the world as Dee Dee must have seen it. It was a quick and easy read and I found it well worth it.

Kimmo Sinivuori says

Dee Dee Ramone fast talks us through his troubled but legendary life. What makes this bio a very good read compared to many other rock 'n' roll autobiographies is that Dee Dee has actually walked the talk. Also, unlike many other rock 'n' rollers who write their autobiographies Dee Dee has not been too proud to get some help to write the book. This means that there is almost no repetition and Dee Dee's story moves forward in an unstoppable fashion like his classic songs for the Ramones. This book could actually be called fear, loathing and sadness in Lower Manhattan. It is entertaining, poignant and most likely highly unreliable account of the gilded age of New York rock scene.

Scott Hamilton says

Man, was that depressing. I knew Dee Dee was the baddest boy in a bad-boy band, drug problems and all. But I didn't know it was THAT bad. After recently finishing "I Slept With Joey Ramone" and having my eyes opened to the fact that no, the Ramones weren't cartoon characters, but rather real people with pretty significant problems, I was prepared for this—or so I thought.

But if half of what Dee Dee claims happened to him is true, I don't know how he survived as long as he did, let alone manage to get on stage night after night and perform. And there's the rub: This was written prior to his death, obviously. So just as you see him turning his life around, cleaning up, and expressing happiness for the first time, you know it's going to be short-lived. That makes the book surreal, like a voice from the grave.

What was even more surprising was how little this book was about the Ramones, or even music in general.

Instead, it was about Dee Dee, and for Dee Dee, life was mainly "copping" his daily drug supply. That, and expressing complete disgust with life and trying to find the will to live. On that level, this becomes an ugly, tedious read. I nearly quit several times, unable to take it.

If you can stand the ugliness, there's some insane stories along the way. Hard to believe, but Dee Dee admits himself that his memories are vague or missing, and he himself wonders what is real and what is drug-fueled fantasy. Better not to analyze that one too deeply, even if it's clear that much of what's contained in the book simply couldn't have happened the way he explains it. And be prepared: This is punk rock, drug-driven beat writing, for all intents and purposes. I frequently doubted I could make it through the book on that basis alone.

But if the book is about Dee Dee and far less about the Ramones, it's vague and sketchy even on that level. There's no mention of his first wife. The band just happens. Etc. So when you're done, you know little about him, other than his demons and his constant struggle for drugs and then to stay clean.

If I'd read this prior to Dee Dee's death, I'd have been at least lifted by its conclusion, when he'd managed to marry Barbara and, by all appearances, clean up. And he'd started making music, having left the Ramones behind for good. But we all know how that turned out. That knowledge made the end of the book really, really tragic...

Dierregi says

Dee Dee was the son of a US soldier stationed in Germany and married to a local lady (whose name Dee Dee cannot even be bothered to divulge). After a difficult childhood in Germany, Dee Dee ended up in the US with his German mother and his sister.

Allegedly, they moved to a NY suburb to escape his abusive father. However, most of what Dee Dee narrates sounds slightly "*off*" and very paranoid. A shy and an unlikable boy, Dee Dee was not popular with his peers. He hooked up with neighbours Johnny and Joey and they took advantage of the chaotic atmosphere of the mid 70's to create a band.

According to Dee Dee, they aimed to reproducing the simple sound of early rock'n roll and they sort of managed, even if none of them could actually play. Then came the usual curse for bands that start to "*make it*": internal disputes, fuelled by drugs and alcohol.

By his own admission Dee Dee had serious mental problems from an early age. Abuse of drugs just made his problems worse, developing the paranoid side of his personality and causing him to leave the band. Two thirds of the book are nothing but Dee Dee complaining about ex band members (and anybody else who had the misfortune to cross his path), mixed with generic self-loathing and demeaning stories about drug abuse.

About the three women in his life:

- 1) Dee Dee spends only a few lines for Connie, who overdosed while working as a prostitute, even if she was supposed to be his soul mate
- 2) Nothing at all about his first wife Vera (which must have pleased her), and,
- 3) something about Barbara, mainly to underline that he hooked up with her when she still was a minor

This type of narrative can be saved only by a strong prose and great literary style. Unfortunately, this is

definitely not the case for Dee Dee's memoir, which is sloppily written and poorly edited. If anything, makes Dee Dee seem even a bigger as***le than he must have been.

Tech Sgt, L.O.D.D. Sector 23 says

what would you rather have? a slick, ghost written run through of events, or the direct hand-written honest memories of a drug and booze addled individual, who, in his spare time, wrote some of the most crucial, original songs in the history of popular music. i know which camp i'm in, but for the full intensely sad story of the ramones, further reading is definitely required. it's a saga that grows with each subsequent account, but this is absolutely dee dee's corner, and written as the act of laying down a marker.

dee dee ramone must be the ultimate enigma in the field of music. he came up with knockout tunes, but had to be shown how to play them, he boiled the art of lyric writing down to base level (i wanna/i don't wanna/like this/don't like that), which was exactly the context the songs required - and he wrote them almost exclusively for someone else (joey, obviously) to sing. no mean feat. but at the same time couldn't cope with the simple lines given to him for the film 'rock 'n' roll high school', his entire contribution - 'yeah! pizza!'. a dumb genius?

i had previously read and enjoyed dee dee's 'legend of a rock star' (vera ramone king's 'poisoned heart' also, but that's another angle to the story), so was familiar with his writing style. yes, basic, clumsy, grammatically all over the place, but also forthright and honest in a car crash style. this gives a far greater impression of the man than any 'assisted' auto/biography could, and to that, it's as good a read as any rock memoir. to my mind it is a valid component in the ramones story, which in turn is amongst the most remarkable and heartbreaking in the medium, each of the separate members bringing something extremely negative and unworkable to the table, somehow producing some of the greatest (and it has to be said, after it was obvious that no money was to be made from album releases, some of the most average) music ever.

laying some of dee dee's more suspect later recordings to the side, i would rate his writings, this in particular, along with his best songwriting and his unique bass playing, as his legacies to the world. you don't get many dee dee ramones to the pound!

Kendal says

Wow, not really sure what to say about this one. I mean if you ever need a reason not to do drugs--it's right here. Crazy thing after crazy thing happened (I would expect no less from the Ramones), I didn't actually know anyone had a life like this.

I have a lot of sympathy for Dee Dee, in my life I of course can't justify most or really anything he did but, his life wasn't easy and I feel sorry for him. Now in 2010 knowing Dee Dee's fate, this book is even more sad. He tried to clean up his life and it's just so sad knowing that despite his efforts drugs still claimed his life.

This was really a very interesting, personal look into a life of not only a rock star in a band I adore, but into to the life of a private broken down man who couldn't seem to escape himself.

I think I expected this to have more details on The Ramones themselves or more things like that, but I'm really not disappointed. I don't think I could have ever expected the things in that book. There was some real charm to Dee Dee's writing, maybe it was the kind of personal way he wrote it, almost a bit like a diary. I'm very glad to have read this!

And I'm thinking this should be implemented as an educational tool to campaign against drug use. Wow.

Alfrediux says

I loved this book, Dee Dee is by far my favorite Ramone and the real punk of the group, this book tells his story from being an american kid raised in post WWII Berlin, to becoming a member of the Ramones and the rest of his life after he quit the band in 1989 to pursue a career in Hip-Hop and to try and quit his addiction to drugs. I really enjoyed the way it was written, it felt like the actual Dee Dee telling the story (unlike Johnny's "Commando" not a bad book but it felt more distant), a lot of parts of the book are quotable, and it's filled with crazy and funny stories, If you're a Ramones fan you're gonna love all the anecdotes, it's sad that the author went on to die from a heroin overdose in 2002, specially after all the struggle he goes through in the final part of his life, but somehow he managed to outlive his old rockstar friends Stiv Bators, Johnny Thunders, Jerry Nolan and even brudder Joey Ramone. I'm looking forward to read the other Dee Dee books now, recommended.

James Oden says

I have to qualify that five star. It wasn't because it was the most awesome writing I had ever read. It wasn't the wonderful imagery. It didn't make me feel good or take me anywhere I wanted to go. What it did do is take me to a place that helped me better understand what this man Douglas Colvin, AKA Dee Dee Ramone went through in his life, and it wasn't pretty. Dee Dee was filled with hatred and self-loathing. His life was one chain of dysfunctional relationships after another that started from birth and ended in his death. The book ends with him overcoming his life long addiction to heroine and various other vices, but sadly after writing the book years later Dee Dee would succumb to his addictions again and OD just like so many of his friends, if they could really be called that. It really was an honest look at the sad state to which a man can go.

To read a book like this you would think you could come away liking the guy. Who can't like the underdog that comes out of such adversity, but there was nothing to like in him. It had been brutally beaten out of him. In some ways I felt like he was a child that never learned to trust, because he so rarely found those he could trust. As a result, he would deaden the sense of a very deep pain he had with one dose of dope after another. In the end, he was silenced forever.

So, why such a high rating. Because it was real. Love it or hate it, it was real.

Ajeje Brazov says

Douglas Glenn Colvin in arte Dee Dee Ramone, anche se sei stato uno scoppiato di livelli astronomici (lo scettro di scoppiato per antonomasia va, però, senza dubbio al tuo "amico" Sid Vicious), ci hai lasciato, con i tuoi "fratellini" Ramones, molte canzoni che hanno fatto e fanno ancora la storia della musica punk. Canzoni come "Poison Heart", che da tue parole è la canzone che più di tutte racconta la tua vita: fatta di eccessi di droghe, di violenza e soprattutto di un'infanzia mai vissuta...

Ramones - Poison Heart

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OfIfz...>

*No one ever thought this one would survive
Helpless child, gonna walk a drum beat behind
Lock you in a dream, never let you go
Never let you laugh or smile, not you.*

*Well, I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart
I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart.*

*Making friends with a homeless torn up man
He just kind of smiles, it really shakes me up.
There's danger on every corner but I'm okay
Walking down the street trying to forget yesterday.*

*Well, I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart.
I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart,
a poison heart, a poison heart, a poison heart ... yeah!*

*You know that life really takes its toll
And a poet's gut reaction is to search his very soul
So much damn confusion before my eyes,
But nothing seems to phase me and this one still survives.*

*I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart.
I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart,
Well, I just want to walk right out of this world,
'Cause everybody has a poison heart.
a poison heart, a poison heart, a poison heart.
a poison heart, a poison heart, a poison heart.*

Sean says

The first Ramones album I ever got was "Acid Eaters". I know, an album that doesn't feature Dee Dee, lol. This was back in the day when they had those record clubs where you can get 10cassettes for the price of 1. I was a metalhead and wanted to venture into Punk. Little did I know, this album was about to open up a whole new world for me! Acid Eaters is a cover album, so from there I knew I had to get an album of originals, enter "Ramone Mania". I quickly began buying each and every album they issued, one by one. I was (and still am!) blow away by how catchy and fun their songs were.

I've been reading a lot of music bio's lately and was happy to have stumbled upon "Lobotomy:Surviving the Ramones" at my local bookstore. That being said, I almost regret reading the book. It reminded me of "The Basketball Diaries"-Carroll or the "The Heroin Diaries"-Sixx, both great reads but incredibly depressing. It's almost as if Dee Dee had nothing good to say about his time in The Ramones. This book is very well written,

which is not suprising given how great of a songwriter he is. I learned alot about his rough childhood and major addiction issues. I do wish the book had more specific details about albums, tours etc. But, I suppose there are other books dedicated to that.

My opinion of the booked changed sharply as I approached the end. I highly recommend it to any Ramones fan. Although it's not very cheerful, it does provide tremendous insight into a very bright, but troubled life. I hope Dee Dee realized how important he and his art was to his many fans.

Katerina Kofronova says

Dlouho se mi nestalo, aby se hlavní hrdina knížky stal mým kamarádem. Dee Deemu Ramonovi se však povedlo možná více než to. Jeho smrt m? zasáhla stejn? jako kdybychom se znali n?kolik let. Dee Dee už asi napo?ád z?stane mou sp?ízn?nou duší. A hlas Joeyho Ramona je dokonalost sama =)

Jaime Courtney says

Dee Dee Ramone's brain isn't always the easiest place to be. He is spastic, summoning anecdotes that are as funny as they are meandering and capricious. He almost succeeds in his affecting the lovable goofball persona over the underlying archetype of career victim, and oblivious statutory rapist.

But as usual, when I learn more about my damaged idols, whether Ian Curtis, Iggy Pop, or Gandhi I am always left trying to justify their repugnant actions. This is a worthwhile exercise if for nothing else than to remind us that everyone is deeply flawed. Intrusive media scrutiny and legend are impossible to stand up to. And that is not a justification.

Andy says

On Page 68 Dee Dee's such a sweet-faced hustler boy, but by Page 179 he looks like the Grim Reaper's boyfriend. I thought Dee Dee was the ultimate punk, fuck Sid Vicious, this is the real shit, read about a guy who put a lot of heart and soul into his music. If you want serious CBGB's gossip check this out, you won't be disappointed. Until Debbie Harry gets off her ass and writes her memoirs.

Deborah Schuff says

I have lived with a close family member's decades-long addictions, so I was very surprised to find myself feeling sympathy and compassion for Dee Dee Ramone. This is the 3rd Ramones' memoirs that I have read, Johnny Ramone's Commando and Mickey Leigh's I Slept With Joey Ramone being the other two. I am surprised and amazed how three such damaged and damaging men created and kept going for 22 years the phenomenon that is the Ramones rock'n'roll band. Lobotomy is worth reading just to hear the voice of one so filled with regret, self-hatred, insights, and finally determination to create a new and better life for himself. How sad that this soulful poet died of a drug overdose just five years after first publishing this.

Tom says

King of the fuckups, king of punk, Dee-Dee we hardly knew ye.

He wrote the best songs for the Ramones, and kept writing for them even after his insufferable behaviour led to a parting of the ways.

He ran way from New York and pitched up in Paddington, London - now that's too weird.

When the Ramones were inducted to the Rock & Roll Hall Of Fame, he dedicated the award to himself.

A street kid, street hustler, who documented with incisive wit and wisdom the mock inarticulacy of teenagers - never as dumb as he pretended to be.
