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The death of Joey Ramone in the summer of 2001 and Dee Dee Ramone in June 2002 provided ample evidence of the high regard that his band was held by fans and critics. Once regarded as a joke, their music little more than an adrenaline rush of one minute five second noise, The Ramones have come to be regarded as having influenced almost every star struck guitarist who knew just three chords and wanted to write a song.

Hey Ho Let's Go: The Story of the Ramones Details

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Dr. Detroit says

"All I ever wanted was to see smiles on the kids' faces" - Marky Ramone

In 2003, life without the Ramones remains a novel concept. After the playing the last of some 2,200 (very) odd gigs in 1996, the band hung up their leather jackets, t-shirts, torn jeans and tennis shoes and rode off into the sunset to the strains of Ennio Morricone's "The Good, The Bad & The Ugly" theme. Anyone with a pulse is cognizant of "da bruddahs" rightful coronation as rawk royalty, although most of the accolades didn't start arriving until they went away.

Everett True postulates they functioned as much like a gang as they did a band, but a more accurate analogy might be La Cosa Nostra, with Johnny as capo di tutti capi and the rest as misfit goombahs. Until the end, it appeared the Ramones' creed was "in for life" and to this day, there appears to be some sort of omerta regarding Richie, who came up to the bigs for a cup of coffee when Marky was too drunk to sit upright on his drum stool.

True, himself a huge fan, paints a picture, warts and all, of four maladjusted kids from Forest Hills who had a musical vision that was rammed home with all the subtlety of a trouser cough on a crowded elevator, succeeding as purveyors of pure white noise in spite of themselves. Embittered somewhere along the way about the brass ring that seemed to elude them in the form of hit records and credit for if not creating punk rock, then at least kickstarting it, the Ramones turned to infighting, drugs, booze and tinkering with their sonic fabric.

The rift between Johnny and Joey is as much attributed to a struggle for control of their musical direction as it is to Johnny's stealing Joey's girlfriend and then marrying her. Is it any wonder long-suffering tour manager Monte Melnick's job is likened to that of a special-ed teacher chaperoning four retards on a 20-year field trip? Surprisingly, for all of the legend surrounding Dee Dee's heroin addiction and the lengths he allegedly went to to cop, it's given short shrift by True, although he doesn't sugarcoat Marky's liquor-soaked tours of duty. As I read True's account of Joey's passing while laying in a hospital bed surrounded by family and friends, I cried like a baby while riding a bus home from work surrounded by total strangers.

As punk marches into the 21st century, the Ramones have been rightfully iconized as the ultimate anti-heroes and the most influential band this side of The Beatles - no, make that the most influential band ever - architects of a unique universe of bad taste, volume, melody, and momentum. Despite that dubious achievement, there is a noticeable dearth in print about them, but True's book takes you to places none of the others do, whether you like it or not.

Alex Ward says

I only read the 1/3 that pertained to my research, but I'll dive back in soon and finish it for fun

Scott Holstad says

I read and wrote a review of a book called Ramones on November 26, 2013, so much of this is overlapping. With that in mind, I'm going to reprint some of that review here:

"Let me begin by saying I've liked the Ramones for a very long time. Since roughly 1980. And while I've enjoyed their music, I never thought they were musical geniuses or lyrical geniuses the way Lennon and McCartney were or even Trent Reznor. It was just fun, fast music. This book is about the music, but I'm downgrading it a couple of stars because the author thinks the Ramones are the world's greatest band, for all intents and purposes. He's a real fan boy. But since this is an authorized biography, I guess you would expect that.

The band started out in New York in 1974. Four disaffected young people who couldn't play a musical instrument to save their lives. They couldn't even imitate their musical heroes, the way Bowie or McCartney did. But they did get instruments and learn a chord. Their first show was a disaster, but soon the new club, CBGB's, found them and nothing was ever the same again. They'd come on stage and rip through 17 songs in 15 minutes or 23 or 24 songs in 20 minutes. The object seemed to be to get through the songs as quickly as possible, with as much loudness as possible. The chiefs at Sire, a new outfit, heard their demo and signed them, and all of a sudden they had a record. And it got great reviews! All of a sudden, they were the founders and leaders of a new punk movement, and they influenced the Sex Pistols, The Clash, The Damned, and many, many other bands. They toured a lot and continued putting out records. That's pretty much the book. A couple of lineup changes, the only one of which — when bassist and song writer Dee Dee quit — was big. There's mention of drugs and alcohol, but just barely. This is a PG rated book, unlike other rock biographies I've read. A lot of the songs are quoted in the text, or snippets of songs, but it serves, in my opinion, to show just how insipid their lyrics were — not how great they were like the author asserts! While the Ramones never sold many records, they did tour a lot, and I guess that's what prompted the author to write, "Everyone in the known universe loves the Ramones today." Huh? They made \$400 for their shows. Their albums sold in the 25,000 to 40,000 range. Obviously NOT everyone in the known universe loves the Ramones...."

Well, this book basically echoes that review, but instead of it being PG rated, it's R rated. We learn of Dee Dee's heroin addiction, of the band's affinity for sniffing glue when younger, of Marky's alcoholism, (and Joey's too, it seems), and Johnny's totalitarianism control freakishness and his Reagan/Bush loving Republican loving right wing politics (which is really weird). We learn how Johnny and Joey stopped talking to each other after about 10 years and spent the next 12 years communicating through others while still playing shows together year after year and still recording albums together. Part of that may have been because Johnny stole Joey's girlfriend and married her.

I used to like the guys, but this book made me feel icky about them. Joey's like this child-like, tall, skinny praying mantis who's always in a dream state and doesn't deal with reality well. Marky is an alcoholic in denial. Dee Dee is in a permanent state of being pissed off and is a drug addict. And Johnny is a right wing nut job penny pinching control freak. Tommy, the original drummer, is the only one who seemed normal. Maybe he got out at just the right time. CJ, Dee Dee's replacement on bass, seems fairly normal too, but he's never really viewed as one of the group.

We learn about how the band feels about music and their place in rock, as well as their views of other groups. We learn that they grew bitter about not selling records and not being recognized for starting punk or speed metal or whatever you want to call it (Johnny called it both). We learn that they seriously hated Styx, Foreigner, Boston, and Journey, as well as Yes and Pink Floyd. We learn that they kind of looked down their noses at the Sex Pistols. We learn that they liked AC/DC and Monster Magnet. We learn they hated goths, although they played a festival with Sisters of Mercy. We learn they hated traditional metal, opening for Black Sabbath and having bottles and cans thrown at them by the audience. We learn the author thinks they

were bigger than the Stones in South America. Perhaps that's true, and perhaps it's true that they played to 50,000 people at a show there, but Queen played to 130,000 people there, so they don't have the record, sorry. (I like Queen more.) The Ramones wavered on liking The Who and The Stones. Sometimes they did; sometimes they didn't. They didn't think too much of Lou Reed. They liked Debbie Harry and Joan Jett, who partied with them.

It was weird reading about them dying at the end of the book. Except for Dee Dee, and perhaps to a certain extent before he got cleaned up, Marky, they didn't really live too hard. After shows, they wouldn't have traditional rock parties with groupies, etc. They'd go out in the clothes they wore at the concert and look for a 7-11 or a Burger King. Then go watch cartoons or monster movies.

As stated in the previous review, the author and many of the people he interviewed thinks the lyrics are genius. Personally, I think they're insipid. But I think that's part of the fun of the Ramones. You can't take them seriously. I don't think they took themselves seriously. How in the hell do you take Beat On The Brat or We're a Happy Family seriously? As to musicianship, many thought Johnny was the best guitarist ever. I think that's insane. (Jeff Beck is.) One person interviewed, however, said Johnny sucked, was horrible, couldn't play his way out of a box. The truth was he was probably somewhere in the middle. I doubt he created a genre, as so many claimed in this book, but he was decent.

Overall, I'm glad I read this book. It filled in a lot of details I didn't know and was entertaining. The only downside was, it lowered my respect for the band members a bit, which is unfortunate. Nonetheless, I'd still recommend this for fans. It's chock full of good info which you can't find elsewhere.

Matt says

Good Ramones book, The Ramones: American Band was better.

Arnel Šari? says

REVIEW IN BOSNIAN: <http://www.onajkojikuca.com/?p=41>

Mark R. says

Comprehensive history of the Ramones, from their beginning to their end. The author includes many interviews and clips from interviews, either those conducted personally or by authors who have previously written about the band.

Everett True is clearly a Ramones fan, but he never hesitates to speculate on the negative aspects of the individual members, or to comment on albums and songs he feels are below the level of quality produced by the band on their first four records.

"Hey Ho Let's Go" isn't necessarily gossipy, but it does contain a decent amount of material relating to feuding among the Ramones, particularly Joey and Johnny, and also tells surprising and occasionally humorous stories of drug abuse, particularly concerning Dee Dee.

If anything, the criticism of the members, or the band in general, shows only True's dedication to the band. Like any fan, when his heroes do something he doesn't like, he complains about it and wonders how the problems he takes issue with could have been avoided.

All in all, a very entertaining book about a great band and their influence on rock n roll.

Roy says

Loved the Ramones and this book covers their history to the sad end with 3 of the boys now gone .

Neal Alexander says

Punk: 'A person of no account, a worthless fellow; a young hooligan or petty criminal' (Shorter Oxford Dictionary).

Although they resisted the 'punk' label given them by the NY magazine of that name, they did fit the bill. In the early days, Joey would get drunk and hang around mental institutions, and Dee Dee was a part time hustler on 53rd & 3rd (as in the song).

The author has the serious fan's licence to 'call' the substandard material as well as eulogize the best. The following passage gives an idea of how they played, even though it's from their late 'tribute' phase:

I don't know if he [Robby Krieger, Doors guitarist] could tell one song from another. Joey introduced him, CJ gave the count, and he missed the first few chords because he was more of a California guy. As soon as it was done, he turned to the band to look for the 'thank you', and they just went '1-2-3-4', and he stood there like a scared deer and ran off the stage.

Guillermo Zepeda says

A must read for those who of us who love The Ramones. This book is phenomenal and I learn more about this great band. GABA GABA GABA HEY, read this book.

Ana says

This book is a punk masterpiece. It's gloriously hilarious. A must read for Ramones lovers.

Kay Smillie says

A decent look at the wonderful Ramones. A dysfunctional "family" who stayed together despite the differing personalities in the band. A band who had so much influence on so many bands and not just punk bands. None of the original classic line up are with us any more but they will live on in our hearts, record collections, DVDs and books like this. Another in my collection of Ramones paraphernalia.

Ray Smillie

Tom says

This is the story of the most important American band, ever. (oh, I know, Lester Bangs spins in his grave, but they invented punk rock. and everything after it).

Everett True tells the story, at times funny, dark, bleak, inspiring, sad - like any family story.

I cried when he described Joey passing away in the hospital - he was our leader, king of the misfits, a rock and roll hero who was too tall, too skinny, wore odd glasses and had a heart of gold.

Johnny was the man in charge, working from job to job (he didn't call them gigs). How would you like to lead an alcoholic, a junkie, and a praying mantis with OCD into the battle of a punk rock show, night after night ?

Many lovely anecdotes, including the description of Johnny's white Mosrite as "Thor's Hammer".

I read it cover to cover, and I know I'll enjoy dipping in and out for a long time.

Gabba Gabba Hey!

Antoni Savander says

Ihan hyvä kirja, paljoa en ennen tätä bändistä tiennyt. Ramones on aina ollut - tai oli silloin kun vielä tekivät levyjä ja keikkailivat - sellainen perusvarma punkbändi. Yksi niistä, jotka eivät paistatelleet julkisuudessa jatkuvasti, soittivat vain rokkia nahkatakeissaan ja leveässä haara-asennossa. Hujoppi-Joey honotti laulut nojaten mikkiständiin. Ramones oli aina kaukana rockmaailman suurimmista tähdistä, mutta uran päätyttyä ja alkuperäisjäsenten poistuessa manan majoille on maine ja kunnia vain kasvanut. Niitä lisäsi myös tämä kirja.

Yksi mikä tässä kirjassa häiritsi, oli kirjoittaja Everett Truen tarpeeton bändien mollaaminen. Mutta ehkä se on hänen tapansa elää elämänsä (ja kirjoittaa kirjansa) niin kuin Ramones opetti. Ramonesista tuli kirjan perusteella sellainen fiilis, että he eivät olleet koskaan tyytyväisiä osaansa. Aina joku teki jotain, mistä he olivat kateellisia. Myi enemmän levyjä, sai punkin perustajan maineen, pääsi telkkariin, myi miljoonittain enemmän levyjä... Vasta kun bändi hajosi, he alkoivat olla tyytyväisiä yli 20 vuoden mittaiseen uraansa.

Moni bändi olisi tehnyt tietyt asiat aivan toisin ja päätynyt ihan eri sfääreihin aktiiviurallaan kuin mihin Ramones päätyi. Nämä queensilaisäjät eivät siihen suostuneet. Siksi heidän suosionsa on ansaittu, vaikka heidän musiikkinsa ei suuria massoja saanutkaan puolelleen.

Mike Gonzalez says

The story of the greatest band in the world.

Brad keil says

I read this at least 100 times when I was in junior high.
