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I, Shithead: A Life In Punk



Synopsis

Joey Keithley, aka Joey Shithead, founded legendary punk pioneers D.O.A. in 1978. Punk kings who spread counterculture around the world, they've been cited as influences by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, Green Day, Rancid and The Offspring; have toured with The Clash, The Ramones, The Dead Kennedys, Black Flag, Nirvana, PiL, Minor Threat and others; and are the subject of two tribute albums. They are the band that introduced the term "hardcore" into punk lexicon and may have turned Nirvana's lead singer Kurt Cobain onto a career in music. But punk is more than a style of music: it's a political act, and D.O.A. have always had a social conscience, having performed in support of Greenpeace, women's rape/crisis centres, prisoner's rights, and antinuke and antiglobalization organizations. Twenty-five years later D.O.A. can claim sales of hundreds of thousands of copies of their 11 albums and tours in 30 different countries, and they are still going strong. I, Shithead is Joey's personal, no-bullshit recollections of a life in punk, starting with the burgeoning punk movement and traversing a generation disillusioned with the status quo, who believed they could change the world: stories of riots, drinking, travelling, playing and conquering all manner of obstacles through sheer determination. Praise for D.O.A.: "They rock out. They blow the roof off. Some of the best shows I've seen in my life were D.O.A. gigs. I've never seen D.O.A. not be amazing." • Henry Rollins (Black Flag, Rollins Band) "The proper medicine growing young minds needed." • Jello Biafra (Dead Kennedys) "Joey Shithead casts a long shadow." • John Doe (X) "They've changed a lot of people's lives." • Dave Grohl (Nirvana, Foo Fighters) Joey "Shithead" Keithley has long been an activist, including as a candidate for the Green Party, and is the founder of Sudden Death Records (www.suddendeath.com). He lives in Vancouver with his wife and their three children.

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Customer Reviews

Punker Keithley, aka Joey Shithead, recounts life in the seminal punk band D.O.A. Having outlived such more famous punkers as the Ramones, the Clash, and Black Flag, D.O.A. has seen other acts issue tribute albums--very unpunkishly reverential but underscoring not only appreciation for D.O.A.'s stuff but also how punk music, like everything the punkers originally hated, has wormed its way into the pop canon. Not that Mr. Shithead would appreciate that sort of thing; he would prefer hewing to D.O.A.'s slogan $\text{talk-action}=0$ (i.e., talk minus action equals zero), a strange credo for an autobiographer, perhaps, but then nobody said punk history would be easier to digest than the punk lifestyle. Although less iconic than, say, Henry Rollins or Joey Ramone, Keithley-Shithead was an important influence on such big-hit bands as the Red Hot Chili Peppers and Nirvana. Think of the Velvet Underground phenomenon of influence well beyond album sales to fully appreciate the D.O.A. saga. Good stuff about an underappreciated, anarchistic act. Mike Tribby
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"They've changed a lot of people's lives."

I was in one of the band's that was lucky enough to play several shows with D.O.A back in the early 1980's, and I can honestly say that I have never seen another band before or to this day with as much energy and raw talent as them. They are the gold standard of what a Rock n Roll band should be. I am still a big fan and still listen to their music. Thanks for sharing Joe.

great

I will start by claiming 100% bias as I've known the author for well over 20 years and have greatly enjoyed his contributions to punk rock for over 25 years. DOA taught a lot of us how to go out and get it done, with "it" being spreading the music and message to the less than masses spread out among the world. Joe's book is simple, straightforward blast of history that will interest anyone into the punk rock way of existence. Essential reading, so get it and enjoy!

Prompt delivery, as promised.

Anyone, and I do mean ANYONE, who is interested in the west coast punk scene needs to read this book. Keithley gives a fantastic first hand account of how he formed his band and all of the tests they endured going from relative nobodies to one of the biggest and best known punk bands in North America. The book is also a mini how-to manual for anyone interested in starting up their own punk band. Keithley talks about the business side of the music industry, what it's like to play gigs to crowds of different sizes and interests, and above all, he gives a great first hand account of just what it takes to make it in the music business. Finally, Keithley's writing style is very easy to digest. The book is written like the lyrics to many of his songs; straight ahead without BS! What's more, the book contains many pictures and personal anecdotes about Vancouver and places beyond. In reading the book it is easy to see yourself sitting at a bar with Keithley as he tells a couple tales over a couple of beers. If you're a punk, or even think about calling yourself a punk, then you owe it to yourself to give this book a read.

Sit down at a kitchen table with Joe Keithley. Open a few beers, and hand him one, or two... Ask him to give you a crash course on himself and his legendary punk band, D.O.A., making sure not to gloss over the interesting bits. If you can't arrange to do this with Joe, picking up a copy of this book would be your only alternative. It's 200+ pages of compelling reading, written by a man who helped define punk music both in and out of Canada, and who certainly put Canada at the roots of the punk historical tree. Unlike a lot of books about punk bands, this is first-person stuff of the first order.

As a big fan of DOA since the late seventies, I was really looking forward to reading this book. Joe gives you a great amount of background about one of the hardest working bands ever. If you love punk music and the DIY attitude, this book is a must read.

Wow...forget the reviews on this page, and by others who don't know any better like Randy Bachman and Dave Grohl. Punk was about throwing down the "state" of things not reproducing self-centered capitalist philosophy in the guise of shameless "punk" branding. Anarchists don't run for the Green Party or tour oppressive states like China that routinely murder their own citizens. The state has done a good job of promoting DOA as its punk representatives and I'm sure that the Order of Canada is waiting in the wings to embrace this type of "safe" rebellion...

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